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ABSTRACT

The Newspaper Division of the proceedings contains the following 22 papers: "Framing Freedom: Hoosier Republican and Democratic Newspaper Editors Frame Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation" (David W. Bulla); "Quantifying Newspaper Quality: 'I Know It When I See It'" (Philip Meyer and Koang-Hyub Kim); "Cultural Convergence: An Examination of Intergroup Bias and Journalism" (Vincent F. Filak); "Keep Up with Time: Top Story Updates in Seven U.S. Online Newspapers" (Jin Xu); "Partisan and Structural Balance in News Stories Covering Incumbent and Open Elections for Governor in Michigan" (Frederick Fico and Eric Freedman); "Perceptions of the Audience by the Alternative Press Producers: A Case Study of 'The Texas Observer'" (InCheol Min); "War with Iraq: How 'The New York Times' and the 'Guardian of London' Covered the Story after the First Anniversary of the Sept. 11 Terrorist Attacks" (James Boden); "A Multistage Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage" (Marilee Long, Michael Slater, and Linda Stapel); "Characterizations of the '911' Attack and Perpetrators in Three U.S. Elite Newspapers" (Li Zeng); "Experience and Internet News: The 'Real' Reason for the Online News Reading Gender Gap" (Amy Schmitz Weiss, Sharon Meraz, Nilo Figur, and Paula M. Poindexter); "Policing the Political Spinners: Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Political Adwatches from 1988-2000" (Chris Glowaki, Thomas J. Johnson, and Kristine E. Kranenburg); "Under Construction: Measures of Community-Building at Newspaper Web Sites" (Cassandra Imfeld and Glenn W. Scott); "'Searching for a New Paradigm: Results of the National Media Writing Faculty Survey" (Mark Masse and Mark Popovich); "The Sociology of Convergence: Challenges and Change in Newspaper News Work" (Jane B. Singer); "America Strikes Back--A Comparative Content Analysis of 'The New York Times' Coverage of U.S. Policy after Pearl Harbor and 9/11" (Olaf Werder); "No Substitute for Being There: How Statewide Public Affairs Television Tries to Fill the Gap for Journalists" (Karen M. Rowley and David D. Kurpius); "The Convergence Continuum: A Model for Studying Collaboration Between Media Newsrooms" (Larry Dailey, Lori Demo, and Mary Spillman); "A Comparative Analysis of Source and Reporter Gender in Newsrooms Managed by Men versus Women" (Stephanie Craft, Wayne Wanta, and Cheolhan Lee); "The Perceived Credibility of Electronic Mail

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in Newspaper Newsgathering" (Bruce Garrison); "The Evolution of Online Newspapers: A Longitudinal Content Analysis, 1997-2003" (Jennifer Greer and Donica Mensing); "Online Versions of US Daily Newspapers: Does Size Matter?" (Thimios Zaharopoulos); and "The Paradox of Editorial Diversity: A Content Analysis of the Cincinnati Enquirer and Cincinnati Post" (Steve Hallock, Ron Rodgers, Mike Gennaria, and Fei Wei). (RS)

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Newspaper

Framing Freedom:
Hoosier Republican and Democratic Newspaper Editors Frame Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation

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Abstract

"FRAMING FREEDOM: HOOSIER REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC NEWSPAPER EDITORS FRAME LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION"

In the fall of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln declared to his fragmented nation that slaves in the seceded states would be considered free on Jan. 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation changed the reason for fighting the war. No longer was the North fighting only to reunite with the South; now it was also fighting for the freedom of black men. What follows is an examination of how both Republican and Democratic newspaper editors in Indiana chose to frame emancipation.

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Introduction

A little bit of daylight is all that President Abraham Lincoln wanted to see. Something, anything to give him a new, perhaps more powerful reason to fight the United States' most bitter war. The news he needed came on Sept. 17, 1862, half a year from the midpoint of the Civil War. The cost of that news, though, was extreme, for on that late summer day the U.S. experienced its bloodiest day in history. The U.S. saw eight times the number of casualties that September day than it would experience in the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, 2001.

The carnage in 1862 occurred near a small town in western Maryland called Sharpsburg, along Antietam Creek. Approximately 6,500 of the 26,134 men wounded in the battle died; another 15,000 lost limbs.[1] The death toll was unprecedented. More men died that day than in all the other 19th-century U.S. wars – the War of 1812, Mexican, Spanish-American and the Indian – combined.[2] The Union posted a nominal victory, although it had almost as many casualties as the Confederacy.[3] Yet it turned out to be almost as pivotal a triumph as the one at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the following July when Union General George G. Meade gained victory over Confederate General Robert E. Lee. In the late summer of 1862, the Union had the upper hand in the western theater, but it had not faired as well in Virginia. Under Lee's leadership, the Confederate army had scored a series of victories that had left the North somber and morose with prospects of eventual defeat. The South was outnumbered, but Lee had kept his army aggressive and mobile, and that proved a difficult strategy for Lincoln's Union military to counter. Lincoln needed any piece of good news that he could lay his hands on to change the mood of his fractured country, and the battle at Antietam turned out to be the just such news. The U.S. president already had decided that he would free the slaves, primarily so that they could serve in the Union military and secondarily because he thought slavery to be immoral. This victory, however small gave, him the impetus to make perhaps the most significant presidential decree in U.S. history.

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[1] James M. McPherson. *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam, The Battle That Changed the Course of the War*. OxFord University Press. New York, New York. 2002, 3.

[2] McPherson, 2002, 3.

[3] Gil Hinshaw. *From 10,500 Battles: A Handbook of Civil War Engagements*. Superior Printing Company. Hobbs, New Mexico. 1996, 27. The Union suffered 12,410 casualties; the Confederacy, 13,724.

Indeed, no policy decision in the entire war caused greater reaction than Lincoln's edict of Sept. 22, 1862. The Emancipation Proclamation, which would take effect on Jan. 1, 1863, ended slavery in the conquered lands in the South. Although it had no effect on slavery in the loyal slave states (Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri), it set the stage for the 13th Amendment, which after the war outlawed the institution permanently throughout the U.S. More importantly, it set into motion the integration of the Union army, for more than 189,000 African Americans would serve in Lincoln's military and form roughly a third of the entire military machine.[4] This enlistment of black men helped give the North a decisive manpower advantage, something that went a long way toward guaranteeing eventual Union victory in a war that would take more than four excruciating years to fight.

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[4] James M. McPherson. *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*. McGraw Hill. Boston, Massachusetts. 2001, 383. McPherson, in footnote 42 on 306, says that 2.1 million served in the Union Army and Navy. The 189,000 black soldiers and sailors made up 9 percent of the total – but that would have been 22 percent of the CSA military force.

Viewed from the distance of the 21st century, the Emancipation Proclamation seems like a just, benign, and righteous executive order. Clearly, Lincoln took the high moral road, and he also added another two hundred thousand men to his military machine. However, it was not a popular decision when Lincoln made it public. In fact, few presidential orders have caused as much animosity as the Emancipation Proclamation did. Only Prohibition comes close to equaling its unpopularity at the time of enactment.

Why was Lincoln's edict so unpopular? Because white men North and South wanted no part of the social, economic, and cultural implications of black equality. The edict so upset Northern Democrats – and even some moderate Republicans – that the Democrats staged significant off-year election victories in the months after the bloody battle at Antietam. The greatest gains came in Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. A Republican majority of 64 seats in the House of Representatives from the 37th Congress would narrow to only 23 seats in the 38th Congress.[5] Indiana, for example, went from having a Republican majority in its congressional delegation to an overwhelming Democratic majority.

Meanwhile, the major cities of the North, responding to both conscription and emancipation, erupted into violence that would not be equaled again until the 1960s. In July, as the battle at Gettysburg came to a dramatic and decisive close, the streets of New York had their own civil war, as mainly Irish immigrants took out their displeasure with both emancipation and the draft on the city's free blacks. Similar riots occurred in

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[5] Infoplease.com. "Composition of Congress by Political Party." URL: http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0774721.html; Also see James G. Randall and Herbert David Donald. *The Civil War and Reconstruction, Second Edition*. D.C. Heath and Company. Lexington, Massachusetts. 1969, 458. Randall and Donald say the Republican majority went from 64 to 27.

Chicago and Detroit. Even smaller cities like Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, Indiana, had civil unrest. The newly arrived Irish feared that the freed blacks would take their low-paying jobs, as had already happened along the docks of the Ohio River in Cincinnati.[6] Freed men used to getting no pay would accept very low pay from employers and would force out those men who were used to slightly higher wages. Why the immigrants took out their frustrations on the newly freed slaves and not the owners speaks volumes about the nature of racism in the U.S., and race was a central issue of the war.

The newspaper editors of the North played a major role in the politics of the war, which were inextricable linked to its military facets. The journalism of the day was based more on party than commercial interest. Most newspapers were small and had circulations of less than a thousand. Editors who subscribed to the philosophies of Edmund Burke, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson sided with the Democrats; editors who were fond of the defunct Whigs, free soil, free labor, and capitalism favored the Republicans. It was still a frontier country, and agriculture was in its twilight years as the nation's primary industry. The spoils of political victory went to the newspaper editors who supported the winning party. State and federal printing contracts helped underwrite the cost of printing and distributing daily and weekly newspapers – as well as one-page daily telegraphic sheets. Advertising was primitive, and except for in major cities the commercial press that would become the hallmark of 20th-century journalism had not yet matured.

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[6] Frank L. Klement. *Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads of the North*. White Mane Books. Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. 1999, 95-96.

Although Lincoln clearly did not have public opinion on his side when he announced the proclamation, he needed as many newspaper editors on his side as he could muster. He needed to sell all of his war policies to the voting public, and none – not even the new income tax or conscription – was less popular than emancipation. Republican editors generally were loyal to Lincoln and tended to support the edict; Democratic editors, who faced suppression and intimidation at the hands of the Administration, military, and Republican activists at a time when the interpretation of the First Amendment was not as universally libertarian as it would become in the 20th century, screamed that the emancipation was unconstitutional since the original document allowed Southerners to hold men and women in bondage while counting each slave as three-fifths human for the purpose of determining proportional congressional representation. Democrats thought anything dealing with slavery had to be changed by a constitutional amendment, and, of course, they knew Republicans did not have the votes in enough of the states to make changes in that fashion. Many War Democrats and some moderate Republicans also opposed emancipation. The majority in the North felt the war was about saving the union and only saving the union. Lincoln's decision to add the freeing of blacks as a major *casus belli* came dangerously close to alienating key swing voting groups.[7] For this reason, the framing of the Emancipation Proclamation is a relevant public opinion case study, and the reason that this paper examines its framing in Indiana is because the war of words over it in the Hoosier State was particularly bitter and would lead directly to a major episode of press suppression during the war.

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[7] Jon R. Stone. *Latin for the Illiterati.* Routledge. New York, New York. 1996, 18. The term *casus belli* means "the cause of the war."

Civil War journalism

The party press meant that a significant amount of text in newspapers of the Midwest – and Indiana in particular – was written with a particular political bent, and that events and issues framing emancipation were written with this bias in mind. Indeed, the party press editors were often major players in the political process, and their editorial content amounted to propaganda. Such major political figures as Clement Laird Vallandigham and Samuel Medary, both of Ohio, had editorial backgrounds. What the editors wrote was largely analytical and interpretive, and their editorials did not exist in an era of objective, neutral, and unbiased reporting. The U.S. had operated in a free-expression environment that had pretty much allowed a diversity of political opinion since Thomas Jefferson failed to renew the Alien and Sedition Acts when he became president. Journalists operated as leading political operatives, and, until the war, spouted their beliefs and their political venom without threat of official censorship. Their newspapers were aimed at audiences who shared their political point of view. These editors did not merely set agenda; they also framed what they wanted their readers to think – and urged them to vote a particular way. For the most part, the editors reinforced previously held positions. However, mid-century U.S. political history was dynamic, and both Republicans and Democrats would undergo dramatic changes in the 1850s and '60s. The Democrats would be divided in half by the election of 1860. The Southern Democrats would lead the move to secede, while the Northern Democrats themselves divide into pro-war and pro-peace factions.

What follows is a study in how newspaper editors in a key Midwestern state framed Lincoln's announcement to free the slaves – a proclamation that in effect changed the nature of the war from one primarily of reunion to one of freedom. This study examines how Republican and Democratic editors in Indiana framed the Emancipation Proclamation. Indiana serves as a case study because it was one of those states where the balance of power between Republicans and Democrats was very close: the governor, Oliver P. Morton, was a Republican; the legislature had a Democratic majority; the congressional delegation was majority Democrat; and the shadow federal military government under was Republican. A dramatic power struggle was at hand in the Hoosier State during the spring after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. Even the Republicans were not totally united. Governor Morton did not agree with Lincoln Administration decisions about military personnel who served in the state's shadow federal government.

Awful riots broke out in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis during mass political rallies in the spring of 1863. In March, a group of Union soldiers riding through Richmond, Indiana, on a transport train disembarked and destroyed the local Democratic newspaper. In May, Brigadier General Milo Smith Hascall, the commander of the District of Indiana and head of its shadow federal government, would suspend publication of 10 Democratic newspapers in the state. For the entire war, one scholar has found evidence for 29 cases of suppression or intimidation of Democratic editors in the Hoosier State.[8] Since Hascall was responsible for a third of these in only six weeks during the spring of 1863, Morton lost patience with the Union officer whom he thought was unnecessarily upsetting Peace Democrats, a large voting bloc at the time. Morton eventually would petition Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton for Hascall's removal because the governor was afraid the Union military officer was over-agitating the Peace Democrats in the Hoosier State.[9] Indeed, Morton had never been thrilled with Hascall as federal military leader of the state. Even though Hascall was a volunteer from Goshen in the northern part of the state, Morton had seen a personal friend, Henry B. Carrington, supplanted by Hascall in April. The governor covertly worked to have Hascall, whom he considered less organized and effective than Carrington, removed.[10]

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[8] Jon Paul Dilts. "Testing Siebert's Proposition in Civil War Indiana." *Journalism Quarterly*. Vol. 63, No. 1. Spring 1986, 366.

The level of suppression of the Democratic press reached its apex during 1863. There were 13 cases of press suppression and intimidation in Indiana during 1863, the highest single-year total of the war;[11] and the overwhelming majority of those cases came while Hascall was in office and Democrats were rallying against what they considered an abolitionist war. When Morton effectively closed down the general assembly because it wanted to introduce entreaties to the South for a peace conference and raised money privately to run the state government, the role of the federal military shadow government increased dramatically. Indiana was a state in turmoil. Hascall, working as Department of the Ohio Commander Ambrose E. Burnside's proxy, worked to stifle the Democrats as the war news took a turn for the worse. Starting with Shiloh in the spring of 1862,

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[9] Stephen E. Towne. "Killing the Serpent Speedily: Governor Morton, General Hascall, and the Suppression of the Democratic Press in Indiana, 1863." UTC Conference Paper. Fall 2002, 7 and 10.
[10] Towne, 2002, 11.
[11] Dilts, 368.

Hoosier Democrats began to see the war negatively. Approximately one-tenth of the 13,047 Union casualties at Shiloh were Hoosiers. After Antietam, Burnside would replace George McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Burnside, a native of Liberty, Indiana, would oversee the disastrous Union loss at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December of 1862, and he was reassigned to a post in Cincinnati overseeing the federal shadow governments in the Midwestern states. When Hascall took office in Indianapolis in the spring of 1863, the Union, now under the direction of Joseph Hooker, was about to suffer another loss, this time at Chancellorsville, Virginia. The Democratic editors, already tired of the overall carnage of the war as well as the draft, income tax, and emancipation, became even more critical of Lincoln, the military, and the Republicans and their editors, who argued for suppression of disloyal editors. The whole situation was a remarkable communications mess, but more importantly it was, like the war, a contest for power, and framing supplied the way to power. Words like loyalty and disloyalty indicate how entrenched political positions were, but because the war itself was so lengthy and so dynamic, the molding of public opinion was not insignificant. Every military event had a political consequence. A long-standing professional army did not exist North or South. While most Northern soldiers, for example, certainly favored the war effort, many of their brethren back home had somewhat different views of the war. The interpersonal communication between father and son, brother and brother, and friend and friend had major political significance. While the soldiers' views tended to be affected most heavily by their personal experience, the views of the men back home were affected by the editorials and news in their hometown papers. What the editors wrote and how they wrote their words molded public opinion. The very existence of the U.S. as a one-nation entity hung in the balance, and the editors played a central role in the opinion-making dynamic of the period.

Methodology

This study is a frame analysis that relies on textual analysis.[12] A textual analysis attempts to describe the structural and rhetorical elements related to emancipation, with an emphasis on the relationship between freedom and power.[13] This study also places the framed issue into a specific historical context. That is, this research will show how Republican and Democratic editors came to develop the prevalent frames that arose in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation's announcement in September and October of 1862 and its taking effect in January of 1863. The analysis looks at what editors emphasized, excluded, and elaborated upon in their editorials on emancipation. It also discusses such relevant framing techniques as headlines, type of article, and placement on the page.

The definition of framing that informs this study comes from scholar Robert M. Entman. He defines framing as follows: "To frame is to select some aspects (attributes) of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text," with the goals of framing including (a) defining or describing a problem, (b) providing a causal interpretation, (c) evaluating a problem and (d) providing a treatment or solution.[14] In essence, as Entman notes, "Frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions."[15] Republican editors tended to frame emancipation in terms of how it would help the Union gain military victory while avoiding the agitation of Democrats with appeals to the morality of abolition – or the immorality of slavery. On the other hand, Democratic editors emphasized legal ramifications of emancipation, suggesting that what Lincoln was doing was revolutionary and added more chaos to an already chaotic situation. Another way to look at framing is through vocabulary, content choice, and sentence complexity. The buzzwords and phrases the editors employed cued readers, and the level of sentence complexity corresponded to how the two sides' framed their arguments – Republicans focusing on loyalty, and the Democrats on constitutionality.

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[12] Donna Lee Dickerson. *The Course of Tolerance: Freedom of the Press in Nineteenth-Century America*. Greenwood. Westport, Connecticut. 1990, 166. Chris A. Paterson. "Transference of Frames in Global Television." In *Framing Public Life*. Stephen D. Reese *et al*. Elbaum. Mahwah, New Jersey. 2001, 341.

[13] Dickerson, 1990, 166.

Framing ultimately is about editorial selection and prominence – or salience. As scholar Charlotte Ryan has noted, media framing is "a central political activity."[16] In the journalism of the Civil War, frames were developed by editors who were central members of political parties who were wrestling for control of the country in the hour of its deepest crisis. The framing contest was undiluted; the gatekeepers were party hacks, not neutral editors. In a sense, there was no traditional framing dialogue because editors were preaching to the choir. Still, the Democratic and Republican editors performed a key role in ordering information about emancipation, and they shaped their readers' view of this significant presidential order when the political order of the country – and, in particular, Indiana – underwent unremitting change.

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[14] Robert M. Entman. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication*. Vol. 43, No. 4, 52.
[15] Entman, 55.
[16] Charlotte Ryan. *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. South End Press. Boston, Massachusetts. 1991, 73.

The Emancipation Proclamation has been chosen for this study because it was a key political action taken at a critical juncture in the war. Lincoln had seen a war that he thought would take only 75,000 men and three months to execute become a 2-year-old conflict involving hundreds of thousands of men that tested the political will of the states that had remained in the Union. His generals proved ineffective, and the South, needing only to defend itself against Northern "invasion," was holding its own on the battlefield. Among Northern resource advantages were superior manpower, industrial capacity, and communication and transportation lines. However, the less-than-expeditious prosecution of the war left many in the North ambivalent about fighting it any longer. Peace advocacy grew in the fall of 1862 and the first half of 1863.

In Indiana, the growing disaffection for the war was largely due to its length. It was also due to the fact that many in the state had Southern and Jeffersonian roots, and the majority of Hoosiers were not interested in fighting a war of abolition. The pragmatic Lincoln, who was never a friend of slavery, though he was not an avowed abolitionist either, was having problems increasing enrollments of soldiers. Thus, he hit on a policy that would help increase enlistments while ameliorating some of the political heat from the vociferous abolitionist wing of the Republican Party that was centered in New England. He decided to free the slaves in the Confederate states, though not in the slave states that remained in the Union. His hope was that the slaves would leave the plantations and join the Union Army. He knew it was a gambit, but he was nearing desperation after the Union suffered almost twice as many casualties as the Confederacy in the Second Battle of Manassas in late August 1862.[17]

The Proclamation, though, alarmed many Northerners, especially Democrats in the Midwest and Irish and German Catholic immigrants in major Northern cities, both of whom were sizable political groups. The Midwest Democrats wanted reunion, but they had little use for abolition because they feared that freed blacks would compete for jobs at a time of economic recession. The Peace Democrats, as they came to be called, wanted to go back to the status quo ante. The immigrants, who distrusted the many anti-immigrant Know-Nothings who joined the Republican Party in large numbers in the late 1850s, also feared free blacks would take their low-level manual labor jobs. For example, Irish and Germans immigrants rioted in Cincinnati in 1863 after they were laid off from their jobs on the docks of the Ohio River only to be replaced by freed blacks who received lower wages.[18] These two groups of Northerners believed Lincoln was changing the objective of the war from reunion to abolition.

Indiana editors

This study analyzes Republican and Democratic newspapers in a few select Hoosier cities in September and October of 1862 and in January of 1863. It will isolate and interpret frameworks in the text. The study will include newspapers from the following Indiana cities: Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Richmond, South Bend, Delphi,

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[17] Hinshaw, 26.

[18] Frank L. Klement. "Catholics as Copperheads during the Civil War." *Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 80, No. 1. January 1994, 37.

Logansport, Plymouth, Goshen, and Evansville. These cities have been chosen because they had robust newspaper traditions at the time and because copies of both a Democratic and Republican paper in these towns exist in the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. This study focuses more on how the content producers utilized framing than it does on what effect the content frames had on audiences, although clearly something happened to the white male voters of Indiana after Lincoln announced the Proclamation in September of 1862. Republicans saw a major reversal in fortune after the fall elections of that year – so much so that the Lincoln Administration used desperate and unconstitutional measures to hold the North together politically in the remaining years of the war – especially universalizing the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

The journalism of the Civil War era was almost entirely of a partisan nature. Very few newspapers in the North were neutral or independent. A few in the larger cities had been moving in that direction just before the war, but the conflict so divided the country that staying on the sidelines wasn't an option. The party press meant that a significant amount of text in newspapers of the Midwest – and Indiana in particular – was written with a particular political bent; events and issues were written from a specific point of view. Indeed, the party press editors were often major players in the political process, and their editorial content amounted to propaganda. What the editors wrote was largely analytical and interpretive, and their editorial content did not exist in an era of objective, neutral, independent, and unbiased reporting. Instead, journalists operated as leading political operatives, and their newspapers were aimed at audiences who shared their political point of view. These editors did not merely set the agenda; they also framed what they wanted their readers to think. Indeed, framing was a central activity of these party journalists. Placement, positioning, word order, and word choice were as important as issue choice. Ultimately, framing is about inclusion and exclusion, and whatever frames the editors on both side chose to use had as much to do with including the arguments that would reinforce their opinions and exclude the arguments that would reinforce their opponents' arguments.

The study also examines a period of time that was crucial in the development of journalism in the Hoosier State. In the spring of 1863, Hoosier newspaper editors would live under two unique government orders that directly impacted the practice of journalism. First, Major General Ambrose Everts Burnside, the commander of the Department of the Ohio, promulgated General Orders 38 in April of 1863. It stated that anyone encouraging men not to enlist or making oral or written critical or derogatory comments about the war effort of the Lincoln Administration would be subject to arrest and a military commission (trial) without benefit of a writ of habeas corpus. A few weeks later, Brigadier General Hascall, the commander of the District of Indiana and Burnside's subordinate, sent out General Orders No. 9, which stated he intended to enforce No. 38, especially for those recalcitrant newspaper editors who were carping at the President.

Burnside would make the most famous arrest of the war, nabbing former Ohio Congressman Clement Laird Vallandigham, who was tried, convicted and exiled to the South for calling Lincoln a dictator in a speech. Hascall would suspend 10 newspapers in Indiana before Gov. Morton and Secretary of War Stanton decided Hascall was doing more political harm than good and relieved him of command in Indianapolis in June of

1863. Then Burnside suspended a Democratic newspaper in Chicago. Editor Wilbur F. Storey raised a ruckus, and the Democratic-majority Illinois legislature censured Burnside. Lincoln waffled and eventually had Burnside rescind the suspension order.

Meanwhile, Democratic editors attacked Lincoln and the military, claiming violations of their rights under the First Amendment. They also continued their attack on emancipation, saying it made the Fugitive Slave Law moribund, as well as complementary issues like the new federal income tax and the draft. Ultimately, the war of words would focus on the reason for the war: union or emancipation. Whether or not the war could have two causes was a central part of the framing. The Democrats tended to avoid such complexity, while the Republican editors championed it. In the subtext existed a darker reality, a diabolical ideology: racism. Another study is needed to examine this subtext in terms of the Indiana press and emancipation.

Framing emancipation

Republican and Democratic newspapers from nine Hoosier cities were closely read looking for evidence of framing. Although frame analysis informed these readings, the approach here is primarily textual analysis. This study looks at how the problem that emancipation attempted to solve was defined or described; how emancipation was interpreted causally; how it was evaluated as a solution to the problem; and looks at what word choices that were made by the editors. Attention was given to what the editors emphasized, excluded and elaborated upon. Similarly, this study looks at how the editors developed the context of emancipation.

Headlines helped frame the discussion. Typical Democratic headlines included "Lincoln's Infamous Proclamation," "The Present Crisis," and "Lincoln's Proclamation"; typical Republican headlines included "The President's Proclamation," "The President's Emancipation Proclamation," "The Proclamation" and "The Emancipation Proclamation." Democratic editors either were negative or personal, while Republican editors tended to be more neutral, formal or deferential.

Almost all of the articles occurred on the second page of either daily or weekly newspapers that were generally four pages in length. The second page was generally reserved for editorial comment with news and commercial advertising often appearing on the front page. There were two types of editorials dealing with emancipation: (1) those that dealt with the issue entirely and (2) those that dealt with the issue in passing. The majority of the cases were single-issue editorials. In terms of placement, editorials on emancipation tended to come on the top half of the page – above the fold. Ten of 15 Republican editorials were above the fold; 10 of 13 Democratic editorials were above the fold.

Almost all of the newspapers, Republican and Democrat, printed the proclamation in its entirety after Sept. 22 when Lincoln first made it public. In a few cases, both Republican and Democratic editors chose to print only key excerpts of the document. The proclamation was generally printed on either page one or page two, usually near the top of the page. Complementary commentary was provided, in all cases on page two. When the proclamation took effect on Jan. 1, 1863, most of the newspapers reprinted Lincoln's edict.

Several major themes emerge in examining the words about emancipation from both Republican and Democratic editors in Indiana. These include power, constitutionality, loyalty, freedom, race, and revolution. Here the frames worked along dichotomous lines. For example, the theme of disloyalty from Republican editors was countered by the theme of loyalty from the Democratic editors. Republican editors hammered away at how Democrats, especially the Peace wing of the party (called Copperheads), were being essentially disloyal in not supporting the President's war measures. On the other hand, Democratic editors claimed that Democrats had loyally fought for the war and reserved the right to criticize its prosecution and policies, and even the right to offer another way through the conflict – namely, diplomacy.

Another major frame dealt with the legality of the edict. Democrats questioned its constitutionality, while Republicans defended its constitutionality. Democrats claimed that slavery was directly dealt with in the Constitution and assumed its prohibition would require constitutional measures like an amendment – which history affirmed with the passing of the 13th Amendment after the war. However, an amendment was difficult to achieve, and the nation had been too divided to get anywhere close to the three-fourths hurdle necessary to make a change to the Constitution. On the other hand, the Republicans claimed that an act of rebellion was unconstitutional and any measure designed to end it was appropriate.

Imagery also helped frame the debate over emancipation. For example, Republican editors sometimes referred to the rebellion as a monster that had to be tamed. One editor referred to slavery as the cornerstone of Confederacy. Tear down slavery, the editor implored, and you destroy the Confederacy. A Democratic editor called the proclamation "harmless thunder" because he thought it was more verbal than practical.

What stands out in analyzing the commentary of the partisan editors in these nine cities is how both sides tended to use power and its relationship to freedom as the organizing principle of emancipation. The contrast comes when the editors developed their frames for each. Republican editors saw power as a necessary and inevitable tool in ensuring the freedom of the Union from rebellion and the ultimate freedom – equality – of black men as seemed the logical consequences of the words written in the Declaration of Independence. The Democratic editors saw emancipation as going against the grain of the Constitution and the nation's history. In forcing emancipation down the throats of the Southerners, the Lincoln Administration was quite literally destroying the economic liberty of Southern white male slaveholders. In the opinion of the Democratic newspaper editors, this opposed everything that the American Revolution stood for. Likewise, the Democrats saw emancipation of the black man in terms of a new, unwanted revolution. What's interesting is that none of the Democratic editors claimed the secession movement itself was legitimate. They hesitated to use the 18th-Century independence movement as an analog because they did not want to see the country divided. They believed a diplomatic solution could be reached, and that Northern radical abolitionists were as dangerous to the nation as fire-breathing Southern slaveholders.

The Republican response

George D. Copeland, editor of the Republican newspaper in Goshen, saw the proclamation in terms of military power. To Copeland, it was merely a war measure "which we believe calculated to weaken and finally compel a surrender of the enemy."[19] He said the Constitution gave Lincoln the power to "use and every means known to civilized warfare in the suppression of the rebellion," including killing rebels, freeing their slaves and/or destroying their property.[20] Copeland also said the Confederates had forfeited their constitutional rights when they started the rebellion. He added that the Rebels could avoid emancipation by laying down their arms.[21] Strictly speaking this was true, for Lincoln did give the Southerners 100 days to end the rebellion without loss of their slaves. Copeland also hit on the disloyalty theme. He warned that no Northerners should interfere in behalf of the Confederacy, directing this warning at the Copperheads. "Let all good citizens rally to the support of the President in his efforts to crush out this monster insurrection and cease finding so much fault and all will be well," Copeland writes.[22]

I. Mattingly and John D. Devor, the editors of the Republican newspaper in Plymouth, framed the debate this way: "If we have a right to take the rebels horses and mules, and guns and powder, why not their slaves."[23] Mattingly and Devor saw it as a matter of presidential prerogative, and they had no doubt Lincoln had the right to free the Southerners' slaves. They also focused on the religious and moral dimensions of the issue. They wrote that opponents of the proclamation would "provoke the wrath of God upon the nation for our injustice and oppression of the colored race … No man who has any justice or mercy in his heart can justify American slavery."[24] Hence, opposing abolition was tantamount to supporting injustice.

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[19] Goshen, Indiana, *Times*, Oct. 2, 1862.
[20] Goshen, Indiana, *Times*, Jan. 8, 1863.
[21] Goshen, Indiana, *Times*, Oct. 2, 1862.
[22] Goshen, Indiana, *Times*, Oct. 2, 1862.
[23] Marshall County, Indiana, *Republican*, Jan. 8, 1863.

Alfred Wheeler, the editor of the Republican paper in South Bend, saw the proclamation in terms of Northern good fortune. Writing in the first week of January 1863, Wheeler lumped emancipation's taking effect with a Union victory at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and small victories elsewhere in the Volunteer State, in Kentucky and an attack on Vicksburg. Wheeler wrote: "We have no rebel successes in any quarter to reports to offset any of the above."[25] Northern victories and stalemates put the Union ahead, in Wheeler's mind. The proclamation would continue that momentum. Of course, Wheeler failed to mention the Democratic gains at the poll in the fall of 1862, but that was another matter.

Appealing to a sense of history in their readers, Republican editors Thomas H. Bringhurst and Joseph Dague in Logansport alluded to past American documents. This was central to developing a sense of patriotism and loyalty. They wrote that the Emancipation Proclamation was similar in stature to the Declaration of Independence because it divorced the nation from an awful institution – in this case, slavery. The Cass County editors, whose paper had favored the Whigs in the 1850s, called slavery the cornerstone of the Confederacy. When it "is removed, the whole fabric will crumble."[26] Bringhurst and Dague also wrote that neither Lincoln nor the North could be held responsible for the death of slavery. Rather, the responsibility belonged to the Southern slaveholders who forced the war on the nation with secession and Fort Sumter. If the Southerners had not forced the issue, emancipation "would never have been necessitated."[27] Furthermore, "Constitutional Liberty" could only be saved through emancipation.[28] They observed that emancipation promised "the dawn of a glorious morning, which promises to reunite and establish our national institutions upon a firmer basis than ever."[29] The moment for a new reunited nation was at hand, and Democrats better support it or keep quiet and allow it to happen.

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[24] Plymouth, Indiana, *Republican*, Jan. 15, 1863.

[25] *St. Joseph Valley* (Indiana) *Register*, Jan. 8, 1863.

[26] Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, Sept. 27, 1862.

Meanwhile, the Indianapolis *Indiana Journal* was perhaps the most modern Republican newspaper in the state. The *Indiana Journal* was owned by the Journal Company, which included Ovid Butler, Joseph M. Tilford, James M. Matthews, and Rawson Vaile.[30] They hired a veteran journalist, Berry R. Sulgrove, to edit the paper. The Journal Company provided the money for the enterprise and Sulgrove handled the editorial content.[31] On Jan. 3, 1863, Sulgrove chose not to provide commentary, but rather he simply reported what the Emancipation Proclamation said. It was placed between a paragraph on Governor Horatio Seymour, a Democrat, being inaugurated in New York and a report about the Chicago Board of Trade excluding the Democratic *Chicago Times* from its reading room.

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[27] Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, Sept. 27, 1862.
[28] Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, Sept. 27, 1862.
[29] Logansport, Indiana, *Journal*, Sept. 27, 1862.
[30] John W. Miller. *Indiana Newspaper Bibliography*. Indiana Historical Society. Indianapolis, Indiana. 1982, 276.
[31] Miller, 276.

Sulgrove provided commentary two days later. It is more matter of fact than most of the editorials written about the Emancipation Proclamation. It claims that Lincoln had the right to free the slaves under the war powers of the executive branch. The *Journal* editor affirms the right a president has to suppress a rebellion and to use whatever means necessary to end the rebellion. Then Sulgrove's piece puts the edict in perspective by pointing to the heroic situation Lincoln found himself in: "An act of graver responsibility it has rarely fallen to the last of man to perform."[32] He ends in a religious tone, hoping the Emancipation Proclamation will have "the gracious favor of Almighty God."[33]

The Goshen *Times'* Copeland also saw Lincoln in heroic terms, as savior of the country, and the proclamation was the instrument of salvation. He wrote in a January 1863 editorial that the president would be best remembered for freeing the slaves precisely because the proclamation was a "great declaration of Freedom."[34] Again invoking the Declaration of Independence, an editor emphasizes freedom.

Delphi *Journal* editor James Scott chose not to print his own commentary about the proclamation in his Republican newspaper. Instead, it ran what Governor Morton had to say about emancipation. Morton, always loyal to Lincoln, favored the edict. In the party press era, it was not unusual for a newspaper editor of a party organ to defer to the words of a congressman, senator, governor, or another party leader. Likewise, John H. Scott, the editor of the Democratic newspaper in Evansville, chose not to print his own views after the initial September announcement. Instead, he ran a series of views from newspapers in Philadelphia and New York. This, too, was a frequent practice in mid-century journalism. Scott attempted to have balance with some of the papers supporting emancipation and some against it. Perhaps the most revealing of those editorials was from the New York *Journal of Commerce*. Its editor observed that the Emancipation Proclamation would distinctly draw the lines between supporters and opponents of the Lincoln Administration.[35]

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[32] Indianapolis, Indiana, *Indiana Journal*, Jan. 5, 1863.
[33] Indianapolis, Indiana, *Indiana Journal*, Jan. 5, 1863.
[34] Goshen, Indiana, *Times*, Jan. 8, 1863.

The Democratic response

The Democratic editors viewed the proclamation with antipathy. They were mainly concerned the abuse of power and saw this as a constitutional issue and a limit on freedom. They held that the chief executive did not possess the authority to end an economic practice that was allowed by the Constitution. Doing so amounted to the type of usurpation reserved for a dictator or monarch, and they added that this went along with the general tenor of trampling civil liberties that began with the suspension of habeas corpus.[36]

Daniel E. VanValkenburgh, editor of the Plymouth *Democrat* in Marshall County, had similar concerns about Lincoln's abuse of power. He observed, "It may be that our liberties are 'clean gone forever.' "[37] VanValkenburgh, who would see his paper suspended by Hascall in May of 1863, felt Lincoln had gone too far in dealing with the so-called "fire in the rear," the dissent of Peace Democrats in the North. The Plymouth

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[35] Evansville, Indiana, *Weekly Gazette*, Oct. 4, 1862.
[36] Jeffrey A. Smith. *War and Press Freedom: The Problem of Prerogative Power*. Oxford University Press. Cary, North Carolina. 1999, 115. Congress went along with Lincoln and passed the Habeas Corpus Act in March of 1863.
[37] Plymouth, Indiana, *Democrat*, Oct. 2, 1862.

Democrat editor thought that the loyal people of Indiana deserved better than martial law. Hoosiers had been loyal to Lincoln and fought for the war. VanValkenburgh believed that Democrats who had come to favor a negotiated settlement of the conflict were being treated with the heavy hand of the federal government.

He was also skeptical about how emancipation would aid the North in winning the war. VanValkenburgh feared Lincoln was being misled by the abolitionists. Ever skeptical, VanValkenburgh referred to comments Lincoln made to the so-called Chicago Committee before he announced the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln had told that pro-abolition group in August that he had his own misgiving about emancipation. "Is there a single Court or magistrate or individual that would be influenced by it there [in the South] … And suppose they could be induced by a proclamation of freedom from me, to throw themselves upon us, what should we do with them [the blacks]," he asked rhetorically.[38] The Plymouth editor himself asked: "Could the President himself successfully answer his own objections to the emancipation policy."[39] VanValkenburgh thought he could not.

Goshen *Democrat* editor William H. Norton was equally skeptical. Norton asked rhetorically, "What good is to be accomplished by this, we are unable to say."[40] He also observed that abolitionists had howled for this edict since the day the war began. Norton wonders aloud why Lincoln worried about how to feed and clothe the freed slaves, but decided to go ahead with the order. "Why so sudden a change," Norton asked.[41] The editor thought the president was not being forthright.

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[38] Plymouth, Indiana, *Democrat*, Oct. 2, 1862. "Would my word free the slaves when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel States," Lincoln asked. Lincoln also worried about the fate of freed blacks in the South after the war.
[39] Plymouth, Indiana, *Democrat*, Oct. 2, 1862.
[40] Goshen, Indiana, *Democrat*, Sept. 24, 1862.

Lincoln had told the Chicago group in August that he even feared some blacks would give their guns to Confederate soldiers and that border state soldiers would go over to the South, but Norton had no illusion. Here Norton interjected race into the argument. He thought the Emancipation Proclamation changed the war objective from that of re-union to "the extermination of the white population in the South" (Goshen, Indiana, *Democrat*, Jan. 7, 1863). The race theme informed VanValkenburgh's writing in the Plymouth *Democrat*. VanValkenburgh said emancipation was based on a "hateful dogma of political equality of the races" (Plymouth, Indiana, *Democrat*, Oct. 30, 1862). Clearly, race was a central issue to many Democrats.

Thomas Tigar, the editor of the Fort Wayne *Sentinel* in heavily Democratic Allen County, ran an editorial by Wilbur F. Storey of the Chicago *Times*. Storey, who would be suppressed by Burnside in June, focused his September editorial on the constitutional issue. Storey said Lincoln could not derive any power from the Constitution that allowed him to free the slaves. He added that military necessity served the Constitution, not the other way around. Storey called the proclamation "*brutum fulmen*," harmless thunder, since it was practically unenforceable.[42] Sarcastically, Storey took aim at abolitionists who claimed emancipation would end the war within 30 days of its taking effect: "We are anxious to behold the stupendous and magnificent results which were to flow, like a mighty stream, from the proclamation."[43] Many Democratic editors in Indiana read Storey closely and framed the issue similarly to the way he did.

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[41] Goshen, Indiana, *Democrat*, Oct. 24, 1862.
[42] Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Sentinel*, Sept. 23, 1862.

Samuel A. Hall, editor of the Logansport *Democratic Pharos*, continued the power theme. He fretted that emancipation would be a powerful tool for the Confederacy, not the Union. Hall thought Lincoln's order would backfire: "Its only effect is to place in the hands of the rebel leaders a most effective argument to rally the entire strength of the South against the government, as indicating a determination to adopt abolition measures so far as it lies in the power of the Administration to do so."[44] Hall, who called the order unwise, impolitic, and unjust, also observed that there had been a few small public demonstrations in Logansport in support of the Emancipation Proclamation, but that they were small. He writes: "The demonstrations were decidedly unpopular among all Democrats, and also a large portion of the Republicans who are for the Government but not for crazy abolitionism – are for the Union but do no believe a negro is as good as a white man."[45] Hall, like so many of the Democratic wordsmiths, could not avoid bringing race into his emancipation framework. Indeed, they assumed their audience preferred such framing.

Earlier, Hall had run an editorial from the *Newburyport Herald*, a Republican paper, that held that causing a revolution among the slaves was uncivilized and improper for a Christian nation. The Newburyport editor worried that a slave uprising would be primarily directed against white women and children since the men were off fighting the war. Hall worried about atrocities committed against females. He also returned to the constitutional frame, saying that breaking its spirit would make the Union no better than the Confederacy. By any means necessary "is the doctrine of revolutionists."[46] Hall alluded to the French Revolution, writing "no man's life would be safe and all property worthless."[47] This appeal to the brutal horror of the French Revolution was a common frame among Democratic editors. Hall also said that the abolitionists had somehow tricked the President into emancipation: "This proclamation was issued against the will and better judgment of the President."[48] Hall was suggesting that Lincoln was too weak to stand up to the radicals in his own party. Ultimately, Hall concluded that emancipation made secession just and necessary as a self-defensive measure by the Southerners because it put the freedom of black men ahead of union as the primary reason for the war.

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[43] Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Sentinel*, Sept. 23, 1862.
[44] Logansport, Indiana, *Democratic Pharos*, Jan. 7, 1863.
[45] Logansport, Indiana, *Democratic Pharos*, Jan. 7, 1863.

Milton R. Graham, editor of the Delphi *Weekly Times*, also used the power frame. Echoing the arguments of the *Indiana State Sentinel* in Indianapolis, Graham questioned whether Lincoln had the constitutional power to free the slaves. In fact, Graham did a little homework. He had a copy of the daily minutes of the U.S. House of Representatives from Feb. 11, 1861. In it he found that the House overwhelmingly (116 to 4) adopted a resolution that stated the federal government nor the people of the non-slaveholding states had the constitutional right to interfere with slavery in any states of the Union. Of course, Graham failed to tell his readers that this resolution was made by the Democratic-majority 36th House before Lincoln took office in March of 1861, although it is true that in the days before he became President he did agree with its sentiment. Lincoln also thought in those days that the majority of Southerners would oppose secession and thought the war chatter to be a bluff.

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[46] Logansport, Indiana, *Democratic Pharos*, Oct. 8, 1862.
[47] Logansport, Indiana, *Democratic Pharos*, Oct. 8, 1862.
[48] Logansport, Indiana, *Democratic Pharos*, Jan. 16, 1863.

Graham, who also wondered why the President caved into the abolitionist, saved his strongest attack for Lincoln's proposal to financially compensate Southern slaveholders who gave into emancipation. The Delphi Democrat wondered where Lincoln would get the money for such compensation: "Do the people of Indiana feel included to be taxed to pay for the slaves of even the loyal men of the South."[49] Hall also said any colonization plan of the freed slaves was "visionary and impracticable."[50] Ultimately, Lincoln agreed with that assessment.

Political power was also centermost in the thoughts of John R. Elder and John Harkness, editors of the *Indiana State Sentinel*, whose paper was intimidated twice by the Union military during the war. Elder and Harkness wondered about what effect emancipation would have on the fall elections in 1862 – and they would prove prophetic since Democrats scored a major victory in the 19th State in October. Elder and Harkness also framed the matter in terms of manliness, claiming that freeing the slaves to get them to fight against their masters was embarrassing to the white men of the North: "It is a confession of weakness – an acknowledgement that twenty millions of white people, with every advantage on their side, can not conquer six millions of whites, shut out from the world, and entirely reliant upon their own resources to carry out the war."[51] Elder and

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[49] Delphi, Indiana, *Weekly Times*, Oct. 4, 1862.
[50] Delphi, Indiana, *Weekly Times*, Oct. 4, 1862.
[51] Indianapolis, Indiana, *Indiana State Sentinel*, Sept. 24, 1862.

Harkness also worried what the proclamation would do to those in the Union military who did not want to fight a war for abolition.

Conclusion

The Democrats framed emancipation in terms of constitutional power. They believed Lincoln was misusing his power based on their interpretation of constitutional law, especially after he suspended the writ of habeas corpus. They were outraged and thought they once-moderate President was turning into a revolutionary. This new attitude of the President flew in the face of their Burkean conservative mindset. On the other hand, Republicans saw emancipation primarily as a war measure, but one that took the high moral road. The Republican editors wanted good news from the war front, and the freeing of black men to help fight it was a matter of pragmatism to them.

The editors of Civil War Indiana did not try to hide or imbed frames in inverted pyramid news stories. Their persuasive pieces did that work directly. Reporting was limited for these very small operations that generally had circulations of 1,000 or less readers. The editors provided the content for their papers. Information came from the telegraph, other newspapers, and gossip. There was a need for patronage, so they were often dependent on political parties to maintain financial solvency. The majority of their readers already held strong political positions. Yet it was a time of major political dynamics in U.S. history. After all, the Republican Party had only been around for a decade. The framing contest was particularly important in 1863 as Democrats gained more and more at the polls.

The Republicans also showed that negative terms could isolate the opposition and diminish their political arguments. The Republican editors referred to the Democrats as Copperheads, the venomous snakes. Supporting the Democrats was hazardous and could ruin the nation. This negative framing word reinforced the idea that disloyalty would harm the Union, and at the same time reinforced nationalism. Political discourse had limitations in time of war, the Republicans held. They would also defend the military's suppression and intimidation of Democratic editors in the Hoosier State in May and June of 1863. The words of the Republican editors would contribute to an atmosphere that allowed pro-union mobs to destroy several Democratic newspapers in the state.

Framing emancipation would prove crucial with the more favorable war news that would come in the summer of 1863. The military victories caused Copperhead criticisms of the policy to lose much of their sting, and the more positive Republican frames ultimately won the day. When General George McClellan lost the presidential election to Lincoln in 1864, he showed how quickly public opinion could change. Known as a soldier-friendly general, McClellan polled only 22 percent of the vote – this with a high percentage of soldiers and ex-soldiers voting. Lincoln had benefited from victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. Yet the war bogged down again in 1864, and Lincoln himself felt he was ripe for an upset. However, Union soldiers and sailors appeared to accept emancipation and fighting the war for freedom, even if many Democratic and some Republican civilians did not.

The war-measure frame won the contest of public opinion. This chapter in U.S. journalism history shows just how dependent frames can be on outside factors such as military and diplomatic news – the fact that England and France never recognized the South was a critical factor in the war's outcome. The Republican editors succeeded at defining and evaluating the Union's problem in the second year of the war as being one of insufficient manpower to fight a war of attrition with the South. The Republican editors avoided making it a war about racial or economic reality; rather, they made it about freedom and equality and alluded to the Declaration of Independence. Instead, it became a war for reunion with newly freed men making the difference. Their newfound freedom would make them highly motivated fighters. Freeing black men and having them fight in the war was the solution Lincoln and the North needed to gain the upper hand. The Democratic editors countered with frames that painted Lincoln as a dictator and a monster. They settled on constitutionality as their main frame. Chicago's Storey was particularly brilliant at this tactic. He and his allies also thought emancipation would rally Democrats North and South. It did, but in the long run the Democratic frames were not enough to unite the party nationally, and Lincoln prevailed in the fall of 1864. He made the war a revolution for freedom. African Americans' service in the Union military proved decisive, and they became a pivotal voting bloc for the Republicans during Reconstruction. There is no greater symbol of this sea change in American politics than the fact that CSA President Jefferson Davis' seat in the U.S. Senate before the war went to a black Republican from Mississippi after the war.

The Democrats' constitutional frame may have had greater legal merit, but the Republicans' pragmatic war-measure frame became a sort of national philosophy. If it works, it must be right. Emancipation worked. It won the war, and it gave a new meaning to Thomas Jefferson's words about all men created equal from the Declaration of Independence. Ironically, Robert E. Lee proposed emancipation for the heavily-Democratic Confederacy in the waning days of the war. It was too late. Lincoln's ploy had already made the difference in the war's outcome and the future of the United States.

The press faced more intrusions on its freedom in the Civil War than in any other U.S. conflict, and perhaps no state's editors faced more official limitations on its freedom to print words than the Democratic editors of Indiana. The bitter political and military conflict was much more important than the civil rights of newspaper editors. As William J. Small has noted about the wartime press, "a troubled electorate at such times is willing to look the other way."[52] Retrospectively, the Republicans' frames had the advantage of the changing military fortunes. The conflict hung in the balance, and the words of both the Republican and Democratic editors were powerful instruments in helping to determine the outcome.

Those words were framed in four major ways: in terms of power, freedom, constitutionality, and loyalty. Free labor was the way in the North, even if the Yankees, except the abolitionists, were not open to black social freedom. The freedom to fight for the Union was the ultimate expression of black power at a time when almost all African Americans were powerless. The Republican editors, taking their cue from their president, tapped into that expression with their war-measure frame. Blacks' fighting for Union and their own freedom was one of several decisive factors in the war, though ultimately manpower, gun power, and technological power proved the difference. Lincoln's

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[52] William J. Small. *Political Power and the Press. W.W. Norton & Company.* New York, New York. 1972, 71.

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Emancipation was a gambit, but it worked. Manpower was the North's biggest advantage. The Union had at least at 2-to-1 advantage in men over the Confederacy.

The Democrats' legal frame may have been more rational, more logical, and even more faithful to the Constitution. However, states' rights and a strict interpretation of the founding fathers' words have not been seen as pragmatic in the 138 years since the war ended in the spring of 1865. This was a moment in the nation's history when a flexible interpretation of the Constitution was needed.

Editors on both sides ultimately realized that frames made complex political, social, and military issues easier to grasp. The frames selected what information needed to be made more salient to readers. Thus, Republican and Democratic editors defined the problem inherent in emancipation in simple ways – Republicans in terms of manpower for the Union military to achieve the goal of reunion, and Democrats in terms of an erosion of political liberty due to presidential abuse of power. They interpreted the issue in terms of power, with freedom as complementary issue, and each offered a solution that would save the country within a context – that is, in a way that was consistent with their view of the nation and the ideology that served as its theoretical basis. They included some aspects of the issue while avoiding others. For example, the Republicans focused on the practical manpower issue, meaning that they avoided the legal issue of whether the president had the authority to free the slaves; the Democrats focused on the erosion of freedom caused by a president who was overstepping his constitutional power, meaning they avoided the immorality of slavery. Editors on both sides did this because they were seeking specific reactions from their audiences. This is the essence of framing.

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Newspaper

QUANTIFYING NEWSPAPER QUALITY

"I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT"

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QUANTIFYING NEWSPAPER QUALITY

ABSTRACT

The bottom-line benefits of reducing newspaper quality are immediate and visible. The long-term costs in reduced reader loyalty are slower to materialize. We are taking the first small steps toward making those costs more visible.

We survey current editors to get their collective judgment on valid indicators of newspaper quality. Then we use factor analysis to reduce their fine-grained rankings to five operable indicators: ease of use, localism, editorial vigor, news quantity, and interpretation.

QUANTIFYING NEWSPAPER QUALITY:

"I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT"

The connection between journalism quality and business success has long been a concern of media scholars (Giles, 1987; Udell, 1978). For the newspaper industry, as it faces competition from disruptive new technologies, the issue has taken on new urgency. Profitability is not as certain as it used to be. Investors and their advisors tend to focus on short-term financial results, and this puts pressure on newspaper managers to cut back on resources in order to maintain steady earnings growth from year to year.

Jack Fuller (2002), head of the Tribune Company, identified the problem at a meeting at the Poynter Institute when he argued that, "those of us who put out newspapers are important … participants in the system of public governance. If we take that seriously, as we should, our jobs as leaders of newspaper enterprises is to find the sweet spot where we can fulfill both our fiduciary obligation to the shareholders and our social obligation to provide communities the kind of information they need in order for people to make their sovereign choices wisely."

The problem has also been called the profit controversy, the apparent conflict between managing high quality and making a profit (Udell, 1978). A numbers of studies argue that high quality is related to readership (Blankenburg, 1989; Cole, 1995; Lacy & Fico, 1991; Stone, Stone, & Trotter, 1981). The assumption of such studies is that readership is related to profitability. This is true most of the time, although some newspaper companies have begun to tailor their products to more specific audiences and increase profitability by reducing readership and circulation to customers less desired by advertisers.

The concept of the "sweet spot" suggests that the relationship between journalistic quality and business success is not linear. It probably follows a bell curve where quality is measured on the horizontal axis, profitability on the vertical. Increasing quality improves profitability up to the peak of the curve. Beyond that point, additional quality fails to bring enough new readers to add to the value of advertising or pricing power, and becomes net cost. The sweet spot is defined by two lines near the peak of the curve. The left boundary marks the point at which reducing quality will harm profits. The right boundary is where increasing quality shifts from net benefit to net cost.

From our own observation of the behavior of publicly-owned newspaper companies and their investors, we believe that many are being managed as though they were on the right or downhill side of the curve. In fact, we believe, they are clustered on the left, or uphill side, where degrading quality creates an imminent danger.

Providing evidence to support this intuitive observation requires many steps, of which this paper takes only one. The proof requires multiple measurements over a long period of time of both profitability and journalistic quality. Our contribution is to help explicate and operationalize the concept of quality.

We stand on the shoulders of Leo Bogart (Bogart, 1989). In addition to replicating and comparing some of the results of Bogart's 1977 study of editors, we try to reduce his many indicators to a manageable few.

Literature Review

John Merrill (1968) addressed the concepts of newspaper quality when he ranked the world's greatest newspapers into "the pyramid of the elite papers": primary elite, secondary elite, tertiary elite, near elite, general newspapers, and mass papers. He developed the marks of the free elite paper for rating newspaper quality for determining a leading quality paper from several surveys (Merrill, 1968). Table 1 summarizes these quality indicators.

Table 1
Five point guideline from John Merrill (1968)

	Newspaper quality indicators
1	Independence; financial stability; integrity; social concern; good writing and editing.
2	Strong opinion and interpretive emphasis; world consciousness; nonsensationalism in articles and makeup.
3	Emphasis on politics, international relations, economics, social welfare, cultural endeavors, education, and science.
4	Concern with getting, developing and keeping a large, intelligent, well educated, articulate and technically proficient staff.
5	Determination to serve and help expand a well-educated, intellectual readership at home and abroad; desire to appeal to, and influence, opinion leaders everywhere.

Note. From *The Elite Press (1968).*

However, criticisms were brought against his criteria of newspaper quality as being too tough to qualify newspapers as elites and being too subjective (Cole, 1995). In his book, Merrill (1968) argued that because newspapers are read and judged by different people with different criteria, researchers should not shrink from evaluating newspaper quality with their subjective criteria. Later, Merrill with Lowenstein (Merrill & Lowenstein, 1971) also suggested common external and internal criteria for evaluating newspaper quality. They offered internal criteria of evaluation related with newspaper itself and external criteria of evaluation related with audiences (Merrill & Lowenstein,

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1971). These are more objective and operationalizable than the previous guidelines. However, they are still not practical and easy to be employed in research studies. Table 2 shows these internal and external criteria.

Table 2
The External and Internal Criteria for Evaluating Newspaper Quality

Internal (using newspaper itself)	External (audience-related)
1. Good typography and makeup techniques	1. Frequency of quotation and allusion
2. Editing and proofreading care	2. Frequency of library subscriptions
3. Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar	3. Reputation among journalists/historians
4. Picture reproduction and printing excellence	4. Reputation in politics, government, diplomacy
5. Balance in editorial/news material	5. Reputation in academic circles
6. Concern with staff quality	
7. Concern with editorial policy	
8. Concern with self-evaluation and outside criticism	

Note. From *Media, Messages and Men (1971)*.

Ghiglione (1973) used journalist judges to determine the quality of newspapers in New England. In this project, judges were asked to write critiques about every daily newspaper in the region. These judgments were explained in detail for each paper. They were based on an examination of 109 dailies, answers to questionnaires, and personal interviews with the editors and publishers of these newspapers (Ghiglione, 1973). He summarized several newspaper quality indicators from these critiques. Based on the data from Ghiglione's study, a second analysis was conducted (Becker, Beam, & Russial, 1978). They found a correlation between newspaper performance and circulation. These studies used quantifiable newspaper indicators such as staff size and starting salary. However, most of them are external rather than internal measures.

As another attempt, George Gladney (1990) surveyed newspaper editors of all sizes in his study regarding organizational standards affecting newspaper quality. The organizational standards used in study were: integrity, staff enterprise, community leadership, editorial independence, staff professionalism, editorial courage, decency, influence, and impartiality (Gladney, 1990). Past studies provide evidence that generally editors share common values regardless of the size of their papers (Gladney, 1990). However, He found that small paper editors evaluate their newspaper somewhat differently than do large paper editors (Gladney, 1990). According to his findings, editors of larger papers value staff enterprise, staff professionalism, and comprehensive news coverage more than small paper editors do. Also, small paper editors place greater value on community leadership, strong local news coverage, and the community press standards (Gladney, 1990). Standard in this study are divided into two categories: organizational and content-related. They also appeared difficult to measure quantitatively.

In another study (Stone et al., 1981), researchers used external indicators from the study of Merrill and Lowenstein: the image or reputation of the newspaper in the field. They asked judges to rank-order their state's superior and inferior newspapers (Stone et al., 1981). They found that newspaper quality is related to newspaper circulation (Stone et al., 1981). 25 percent of variance in the circulation is attributable to the newspaper quality. However, the quality indicators in this study, the image or reputation of the newspaper, are also very subjective criteria.

Some other studies tried to extend the concept of journalism quality beyond the opinions of experts. Although they had still included expert opinions about newspaper quality, they brought the readers' opinion into the analysis. These research studies included newspaper readers in evaluating newspaper quality in addition to experts.

Unfortunately, these kinds of very interesting indicators do not lend themselves to a large scale analysis of newspaper quality (Bogart, 1989). Although these subjective quality criteria might be frequently used by editors or professors for assessing newspaper quality, they are hard to replicate(Bogart, 1989). Also, they might be inherently correlated with newspaper circulation considering that large newspapers get more positive evaluation. What we needed are more objective measurements of newspaper quality that can lead to consistent replication over time regardless of situations and judges. In this sense, Bogart's survey of editors is a landmark for measurable newspaper quality indicators. He prioritized newspaper quality indicators from the responses of editors and came up with the 23 newspaper quality indicators that can be objectively applied to any newspaper (Bogart, 1989). Table 3 summarizes these 23 newspaper quality indicators.

In his study, Bogart surveyed 746 newspaper editors with a 56% response rate. In addition to subjective criteria they would use to evaluate newspaper quality, he asked them to rate above attributes of newspaper quality (Bogart, 1989). He suggested seven subjective attributes when evaluating newspaper quality: accuracy, impartiality in reporting, investigative enterprise, specialized staff skill, individuality of character, civic-mindedness, and literary style (Bogart, 1989). He argued that all these subjective attributes are beyond discussion and editors commonly use them when they evaluate their own newspapers or others. The top three ranked subjective criteria are accuracy, impartiality in reporting, and investigative enterprise. However, it was argued that these subjective attributes could not be used in a large-scale study effectively and what we need are yardsticks that can be readily determined or actually measured (Bogart, 1989).

Table 3
Newspaper Quality Indicators

Rank	Quality Indicators
1	Ratio of staff-written copy to wire service and feature service copy
2	Total amount of non-advertising content
3	Ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports
4	Number of letters to the editor per issue
5	Diversity of political columnists
6	High "readability" score
7	Ratio of illustrations to text
8	Ratio of non-advertising content to advertising content
9	Ratio of news to features
10	Number of staff-bylined features
11	Ratio of sports news and features to total news content (TNC)
12	Presence of news summary
13	Presence of an "action line" column
14	Number of editorials per issue
15	Number of wire services carried
16	Ratio of cultural news, reviews, and features to TNC
17	Ratio of service journalism news to TNC
18	Ratio of business news, features to TNC
19	Number of political columnists
20	Number of comic strips
21	Length of average front page story
22	Presence of an astrology column
23	Ratio of state, national, world news to local news

From *Press and Public (1989).*

The most important characteristics of these indicators is that they can be easily and reliably measured using content analysis. For example, in their studies, Lacy and

Fico analyzed newspaper content based on seven quality indicators from Bogart's study (Lacy & Fico, 1990, 1991). These seven indicators were: high ratio of staff-written copy to wire service and feature service copy; total amount of non-advertising copy; high ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports; high ratio of illustrations to text; number of wire services carried; length of average front page news story; and high ratio of non-advertising content to advertising (Lacy & Fico, 1990, 1991). In addition, they added an eighth measure to these seven indicators: the square inches of copy divided by the number of reporters listed with bylines (Lacy & Fico, 1990). The relationship of quality and circulation was determined by regressing quality indicators from 1984 newspapers against circulation figures from 1985 (Lacy & Fico, 1991). The researchers found that newspaper quality is related to a newspaper circulation size. About 22 percent of variance was explained by newspaper quality, and about 37 percent was explained by city population (Lacy & Fico, 1991).

In another study, Cole (1995) used these quality indicators to explore the relationship between quality and circulation. These quality indicators were measured in the *Dallas Morning News*. This study used Bogart's quality variables to regress against circulation figures from 1978-1991 (Cole, 1995). The results from this study indicated that newspaper quality at time 1 positively affects circulation at time 2 (Cole, 1995).

Considering these studies which successfully utilized quality indicators, Leo Bogart's work moved the definition of quality away from a panel of experts or readers and toward an objective set of criteria that can be used repeatedly in different research studies. This successful use of newspaper quality indicators validates Bogart's notion that quality instruments can be relatively objective and reliable.

However, considering that a quarter century has passed and newspapers' competitive environment market has dramatically changed, it is worth revisiting Bogart's indicators with current editors' evaluations with a renewed effort to define and operationalize the concept of quality.

Research Design

We chose 15 newspaper quality indicators to evaluate, including those ranked the highest in Bogart's survey. His population was members of the American Society of Newspaper editors and the American Press Managing Editors. Ours consists solely of the former. ASNE membership is limited to "Directing editors of daily newspapers and people directly involved with developing content for daily newspapers." (ASNE 2003).

Inviting letters were sent to the members with the Web questionnaire address (still available at http://www.unc.edu/~hyub/newsquality.html). They were given the basic information regarding the purpose of the study and the identity of the researchers. To maximize the response rate, up to three follow-ups were made by e-mail.

Results

This newspaper quality survey was conducted from September 6 through November 18. The quality indicators are listed in Table 4 with their rankings in Bogart's study and rankings in this study as well. In addition to these quantitative indicators, an open-ended question was included to reflect editors own opinions regarding newspaper quality.

With the final 285 responses from the total number of 568 editors, the response rate was 50.2 percent. In terms of gender, there is a much higher number of male (75%) than female (24%) respondents. The largest proportion of respondents hold a college degree (49%), followed by some who have postgraduate degrees (26%) and who have completed some postgraduate work (19%). Regarding the age of respondents, the largest proportion of respondents is over 50 years of age (59%), followed by those between 36 and 50 years of age (40%). There is no respondent with the age under 36. Those respondents belong equally to privately (47%) and publicly (52%) owned newspaper companies.

Before the main analysis, univariate analysis was conducted to screen possible outliers and detect hazardous violations of statistical assumptions in the data. There were few outliers, and, considering the relatively big sample size, they are not likely to have significant effects on our main analyses. Distribution of these factors were slightly skewed but mainly bell-shaped.

Table 4
Newspaper Quality Factors

	Newspaper Quality Indicator	Rank	Rank (Bogart)
Q1	High ratio of staff-written copy to wire service and feature service copy	3	1
Q2	High ratio of non-advertising content to advertising	10	8
Q3	Total amount of non-advertising content	2	2
Q4	High ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports	9	3
Q5	Number of letters to the editor per issue	6	4
Q6	Diversity of political columnists	4	5
Q7	High "readability" on Flesch or similar scoring systems	7	6
Q8	High ratio of art to text	12	7
Q9	High ratio of news to feature	8	9
Q10	Number of staff-bylined stories	5	10
Q11	Number of "briefs" columns	11	
Q12	Number of editorials per issue	14	11
Q13	Vigor of editorials	1	
Q14	Number of wire services carried	13	12
Q15	Number of comic strips	15	13

First, to compare the results from this study to the Bogart's study, a Spearman's nonparametric correlation method was used. The ranking from this study is highly correlated with that from the Bogart's study with the correlation coefficient 0.77 ($p < 0.01$). These results show that evaluations of newspaper quality indicators have been stable over time among editors.

Next, independent sample t-tests and analysis of variance with 15 indicators as dependent variables by the company type (private and public), age, gender, and education level as independent variables were conducted. The evaluations of 15 indicators are not different by age and education levels of editors ($p > 0.05$). In terms of gender, the editors' evaluations of high ratio of non-advertising content to advertising ($p < 0.01$), high ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports ($p < 0.001$), high ratio of news to feature ($p < 0.05$) were significantly different. Female editors gave higher evaluations to high ratio of non-advertising content to advertising and high ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports than male editors. Male editors gave higher evaluations to high ratio of news to feature than female editors. Regarding the company type, editors from publicly owned newspaper gave higher evaluation to high ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports than editors working in privately owned companies.

Finally, factor analysis was used to reduce the data to a few manageable concepts. To identify potential common factors underlying the editors' evaluations of newspaper quality indicators, principal axis factoring was performed. However, initially a principal components analysis, which analyzes variance, was conducted to examine the factorability of the correlation matrix and to get an indication of the optimal number of potential factors. The initial principal components analysis revealed that the correlation matrix was factorable with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy value 0.709. As the next step, we needed to decide how many factors to retain from original 15 indicators. This is an arbitrary decision. However, there are some guidelines that are commonly used. Both the Kaiser criterion, which suggests retaining factors with eigenvalue greater than 1, and the scree plot, led us to believe that five factors are reasonable in this data set. Therefore, systematic examination of the five-factor solutions, with varimax rotation, was conducted with the extraction procedure of principal axis factoring. Factor loadings of 0.35 or above were considered as statistically meaningful in this analysis.

The factor loadings are relatively clear in this analysis. The 15 items are distributed into five factors. We interpret them as follows:

1. Ease of use (see Table 5 for details).
2. Localism (Table 6).
3. Editorial vigor (Table 7).
4. News quantity (Table 8).
5. Interpretation (Table 9).

Table 5

The first factor (Ease of use)		
#	Quality Indicator	Factor Loading
Q15	Number of comic strips	.503
Q7	High "readability" on Flesch or similar scoring systems	.521
Q11	Number of "briefs" columns	.555
Q8	High ratio of art to text	.616

Table 6

The second factor (Localism)		
#	Quality Indicator	Factor Loading
Q10	Number of staff-bylined stories	.502
Q1	High ratio of staff-written copy to wire service and feature service copy	.968

Table 7

The third factor (Editorial vigor)		
#	Quality Indicator	Factor Loading
Q13	Vigor of editorials	.403
Q12	Number of editorials per issue	.641
Q5	Number of letters to the editor per issue	.663

Table 8

The fourth factor (Quantity of news)		
#	Quality Indicator	Factor Loading
Q9	High ratio of news to feature	.366
Q2	High ratio of non-advertising content to advertising	.405
Q3	Total amount of non-advertising content	.410
Q14	Number of wire services carried	.538

Table 9

The fifth factor (Interpretation)		
#	Quality Indicator	Factor Loading
Q6	Diversity of political columnists	.565
Q4	High ratio of news interpretations and backgrounders to spot news reports	.601

Even though many editors criticized these quantifiable quality indicators as being irrelevant, their evaluations lead to five intuitively satisfying dimensions. From the results, we conclude that measuring the dimensions ease of use, localism, editorial vigor, news quantity, and interpretation can start us on the road to a measurement system that could eventually lead to defining and locating the sweet spot.

There is more, of course. Responses to our open-ended questions show that editors still value such traditionally appreciated quality indicators as accuracy of reporting, investigative reporting, staff skills, and civic mindedness.

Quality journalism, in the minds of some, is more cost than gain. We think that perception is based, in most cases, on an erroneous perception about the costs of lowering quality. Bottom-line benefits are immediate, but the cost in diminished reader loyalty and reduced cohort replacement are slower to materialize. The industry urgently needs to find the resources to help newspaper managers position their products more precisely along the profit-service axis. In the absence of such accurate positioning, both their profitability and their social responsibility may be at risk.

The next step in attacking that problem is to validate these measures of quality by linking them to financial performance. We share our results now in the hope that these five indicators can be of use to other researchers, particularly those in the still resource-rich newspaper industry, who are concerned with this issue.

Newspaper

Cultural Convergence:

An examination of intergroup bias and journalism

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Abstract

A survey of 189 print and broadcast journalists (n=189) assessed whether journalists possess characteristics of groups in an intergroup-bias dynamic. The participants rated a convergence plan more positively when they perceived it to have been created by members of their ingroup as opposed to their outgroup. Additionally, journalists were more positive toward the group that created the plan if they perceived the group not to be comprised solely of outgroup members. They were also less positive toward the plan and the group that created it if the plan were to be implemented in their own newsroom. Implications for convergence and intergroup bias are discussed.

In an attempt to take advantage of media mergers and the emergence of the World Wide Web as a news vehicle, several media companies have invested heavily in the concept of newsroom convergence. This approach to news, which combines print, broadcast, and on-line components into one news agency (McConnell, 2001), has been seen as a way to maximize market share and improve news dissemination efficiency. Critics, however, have viewed it as a way to thin newsroom staffs and improve profit margins.

For news organizations that are slowly wading into the shallow end of the convergence pool, the changes required to become "convergence ready" are minimal. A few reporters from each medium are asked to share resources for a specific project. After it has been completed, both sides go back to their respective news outlets and continue to work as they always have. For full-scale convergence operations, the changes are substantial. Physical and organizational accommodations must be made for each group to continue to do its daily work. Networks must be built, policies must be implemented, and staffs must be reorganized. This takes time, energy, and money and must be completed while each organization continues to put out a daily news product.

Beyond these physical changes, emotional and cultural changes must also be addressed. Journalists have traditionally rejected large-scale changes that attempt to alter how they perceive themselves and their occupations (Argyris, 1974). This does not bode well for a switch to a media model that requires cooperation among journalists who are used to competing with one another. Researchers have argued that print and broadcast journalists have worked in opposition to one another for so long, they have been trained to dislike and distrust one another (Killebrew, 2001).

A recent pilot study by Silcock and Keith (2002) demonstrated that journalists in a converged environment found that cultural differences created the greatest problem during the cooperative process. Through a series of interviews, these researchers found that cultural biases created an environment of stereotyping. The authors also found that the journalists clashed when discussing issues of news quality and story ownership.

These issues, while not addressed in this fashion by Silcock and Keith, are the rudiments of intergroup bias. While the authors posit that cultural conflict can be reduced by contact, intergroup conflict literature (see Allport, 1954, for a theoretical basis; Miller, Brewer & Edwards, 1985, for an example) states that contact itself is not a cure for conflict. The question then becomes: Are print and broadcast journalists in a state of intergroup conflict?

This study will examine whether integroup bias plays a role in how journalists perceive an attempt to converge news operations. While studies throughout the years have demonstrated that source validity impacts credibility, this study uses intergroup bias research to more clearly explain the issue of message approval. It will also shed light on the problems associated with converging diametrically opposed groups into one news-gathering outlet.

Convergence defined

As it is used here, convergence is defined as creating one version of a news product for a newspaper, another for a website, and another for television all within a single news organization

(Rabasca, 2001). This can be done for one project, or it can be a part of daily routine. It can be done by a group of reporters, videographers, and editors or by a single person, who restructures his or her work for each media platform (Erb, 2001). A number of news organizations, including those in Milwaukee, Phoenix, Richmond, Oklahoma City, Dallas, and the Quad Cities have attempted convergence and found varying levels of success (America, 2002; Callinan, 2001; Dyer, 2002; Rabasca, 2001).

A litmus test for convergence has been in Tampa Bay, where the Tampa Bay Tribune, KFLA-TV, and Tampa Bay Online (TBO) have been merged. Media General, the parent corporation for these media outlets, has invested heavily in this new venture. The three organizations have relocated to a $35 million building, specifically constructed with convergence in mind. Several other media companies, including Hearst-Argyle and Gannett, are attempting to follow suit and create synergies between television stations and newspapers (McConnell, 2001).

The three media share news tips and cue viewers and readers to look toward their other components for additional information (Carr, 2002a). In this news organization, pieces created for print are turned into stories for television. TV anchors receive story tips from print reporters, who are in turn given credit for their work on-air. TBO works independently on projects, but also is used to augment pieces that appear on TV and in the newspaper.

Those who work at the News Center view the conglomerate as a large pool of resources from which each outlet draws the information necessary to tell a story on its platform (Wetmore, 2001). While the organization logged more than "600 acts of convergence" in its first

18 months, the majority of collaboration occurs on breaking news and long-range stories (Rabasca, 2001).

Criticisms of convergence

Like many other radical changes, convergence has created a clear divide between those who believe in it and those who expect it to pass on through like other "fad-journalism" projects (Thelen, 2000). Thus far, the results for converging organizations have been mixed. The level of enthusiasm for convergence appears to be based primarily on whether the individual is in a converged newsroom (Anzur, 2002). Tampa reports success mostly while covering breaking news, where the benefits of convergence are both immediate and obvious (Wohleber, 2000).

Hammond, Petersen, and Thomsen (2000) found that the groups involved in their converged newsroom formed medium-based cliques and engaged in competitive and hostile behavior. The groups were expected to merge seamlessly, but they failed to gel as a collective. Newsroom leaders in Tampa Bay have found that the natural divisions formed throughout years of working in separate platforms can create barriers to convergence (Carr, 2002b). Bulla's (2002) work with newsroom workers found that journalists tended to resist the change to a converged environment. Participants in his study stated that reporters feared they were "scooping" themselves by allowing their work to be disseminated through another outlet.

Journalists cited in professional journals also have argued that convergence is a way for owners and management to eliminate a large portion of the newsroom staff (McConnell, 2001). Carl Gottlieb, who works with the Project for Excellence in Journalism, said he fears that owners will use convergence to trim a media outlet's newspaper staff. Those journalists who remain will spoon-feed the news they find to television talking heads, he added.

Those who are working in converged environments argue that convergence efficiencies will not reduce the number of hours necessary to create the products for each platform (Carr, 2002b). Carr does admit, however, that while no jobs have been lost to convergence, there has been a hiring freeze and some cutbacks in Tampa. Others noted that finances were tightened in Tampa in the past year (Anzur, 2002).

Journalists might be willing to buy into the converged system if there is a sense that by entering into this new arrangement, better journalism will follow (Murphy, 2002). This is not the case in the current state of convergence, where the bottom line is more important than the front page. Haiman (2002) argued that convergence is usually seen as a way to attain better marketing rather than better journalism. Those who favor convergence say the system has created synergy, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Callinan, 2002; Dyer, 2002). Critics, however, maintain that these converged outlets offer little in the way of additional original or improved journalism (Downie & Kaiser, 2002). Instead of finding new angles and ideas, traditional newspaper fare is previewed on television. Rather than delivering several parcels of news to the audience, the media seems to be delivering one parcel, wrapped in several ways (Beltrame, 2001).

Newsroom Culture

Examining newsroom culture, as Fee (2002) and others have done, is an important element to understanding convergence. Viewing newsrooms as social cultures acknowledges that newsrooms are more than job sites. Each newsroom has a set of values that helps its employees understand what is expected of them each day. Like any social or ethnic group, journalists have formed a culture.

A recent study for the American Society of Newspaper Editors examined the culture of newspaper newsrooms. The study found that there were two basic kinds of organizational cultures in newsrooms: defensive and constructive. Mary Nesbitt, the managing director of the Readership Institute, argues that constructive newspapers do a better job of collaborating across departments. She also states that constructive newspapers have a higher readership, a better sense of purpose and lower employee turnover. The workers there are also more satisfied with their jobs and less threatened by working with others. This is due to their forward-looking attitudes and their ability to be flexible toward change. The study also found that more than 80% of the sample contained newsrooms with defensive cultures. This culture is comprised people who fight to maintain their cultural identity in order to retain a sense of security.

While this study examined newspapers only, research has indicated that television newsrooms fit this pattern as well. Television newsrooms are fast paced, measure their success through ratings, and focus on being first (Downie & Kaiser, 2002). In an attempt to get the story first, broadcast journalists have been accused of being "hatchet men" and putting quality of news behind other news values (Leo, 1996). In his examination of three broadcast newsrooms, McManus (1990) found that television journalists mirrored the actions and reactions found in print newsrooms by Tuchman (1978). Overworked and poorly motivated, the journalists in both studies sought to grab as much news as possible and do so as quickly as they could. In this regard, journalists in both print and broadcast newsrooms fell victim to "meat grinder" journalism, where production was valued above all else.

Newsroom culture is not defined overtly, but rather through a socialized set of norms and values embedded in the daily undertakings of those in the newsroom (Erickson, Baranek, & Chan, 1987). One of the most influential studies of newsroom culture is Warren Breed's 1955 study, "Social Control in the Newsroom." Breed found that journalists were never obedient to a written or explicitly stated policy. Instead, journalists used socially learned norms to retain order in the newsroom. Older staffers policed newer staffers to maintain a common thread of cultural understanding. Stories, covered in editing marks, were returned to reporters in an attempt to not only make the story "publishable," but to reinforce what was "good" copy. In a recent interview (Reese & Ballenger, 2001), Breed said he had been socialized into his newsroom in much the same way as the reporters he had interviewed.

> In working for the Oakland Post-Enquirer, the reporters were expected to follow policy. Now this was a Hearst paper with many (now faded) sacred cows: favorable to one of the two Republican factions (Knowland, not Kelly), anti-labor, anti-Japanese (the "yellow peril"), anti-minorities and vividly patriotic… Any patriotic event received almost reverent coverage. For example, I was assigned to cover "I am an American Day." An older reporter tipped me off to lead with "Bands playing and flags flying." The next year I advised a younger reporter and her story began, "With band playing and flags flying…" (p. 649).

Subsequent studies of newsrooms and their cultures demonstrated similar socialization issues. Schlesinger (1978) found in his study of the British Broadcasting Company that modes of control operated as an undercurrent throughout the news agency. While those working at the agency balked at the idea that a "policy" was in place to keep them in line, they did acknowledge a sense of "guidance" from their superiors. Sigelman's (1973) study of two "Southeast City" newspapers furthered Breed's initial findings of socialization. Sigelman discovered that reporters were socialized after they were hired. Policies and procedures, again, were not part of an overt brainwashing but rather an informal process in which new reporters learned from veterans.

Westin (2001) has argued that broadcast newsrooms also have a cultural structure that is reinforced through the socialization of new members. Carr (1990) found that many broadcast newsrooms were unwilling to alter their approach to journalism through the use of technology. Aside from financial concerns, the main reason these newsrooms had failed to innovate was a sense that such wide-scale changes were not worth the effort.

Journalists continually support the norm of conformity within the social framework of the news agency (Argyris, 1974). Through the use of evaluation and control, newsroom personnel prevent innovations from ruining the culture of the organization. By shouting down new ideas and withholding rewards, newsroom members can quiet those who attempt to alter the newsroom culture.

Intergroup bias

The previous section established an understanding of the social and cultural environment of newsrooms and how this environment affects the attitudes journalists hold toward their profession. The discussion will now turn to intergroup bias and its influences on how journalists perceive themselves and others. Researchers have examined intergroup bias for 50 years and have demonstrated ways it affects an individual's reactions toward others. Newsroom culture fits within the parameters of this theory.

Intergroup bias refers to the way in which members of competing groups tend to show favor toward their own group rather than favoring members of another group (Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). This behavior can take place as either ingroup favoritism or outgroup derogation. It is at the group level that rules, association, and conflict are derived. Tajfel and Turner (1986) stated that a social group is best defined as:

> A collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members in the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it. (p. 15)

Tajfel, Turner and their colleagues (Tajfel, 1969; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner, 1981, 1982, 1999; Turner & Reynolds, 2001) have helped structure intergroup conflict theory over the past 30 years. In developing Social Identity Theory, these researchers have argued that the organization of people into groups can create ingroup favoritism. Individuals align with others who praise what they praise and condemn what they condemn. The use of group affiliation can provide a sense of worth and social value for groups and group members (Turner, 1999). As Sherif, et al. (1961) discovered in the Robbers Cave experiment, affiliation with a group by itself, even in the absence of any other group, can create ties to the group and obedience to the group's rules.

Members of social groups choose to join them and accept a role in them to improve positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The decision to join a group and enact a role is done to make the individual gain a sense of belonging. In this categorization process, the individual, not members of other groups, decides how he or she will be viewed (Turner, 1999). While outsiders might attempt to label an individual, only the individual can truly categorize him or herself (Turner, et al., 1987).

By buying into the culture of the newsroom, journalists have become members of a social group. The set of norms and values that are centered on the needs of each newsroom is no different than those of a social group. Journalists work toward common goals of informing the public and beating the competition. Each newsroom has a value system that drives the actions of its members. Journalists buy into the system and pride themselves on exemplifying the values of the collective (Argyris, 1974).

Once an individual has come to associate him or herself with a group, it takes very little to demonstrate signs of intergroup bias. Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, and Monteith (2001) found that simply knowing oneself to have group affiliations is enough to sponsor ingroup bias. In this study, the authors asked participants to match pleasant and unpleasant words with ingroups and outgroups. As posited in social identity theory literature, the individuals associated their ingroup with more positive words and the outgroup with more negative words. The researchers also asked participants to pair the positive and negative words with their ingroup and with a group with which they had no prior knowledge. Given a dichotomous choice, individuals consistently paired positive words with the ingroup while assigning the negative words to the outgroup. This study clearly demonstrated that the participants viewed the exercise in the same manner as they would a zero-sum game. If their group was to be viewed as positive, the outgroup must be negative and rewards (positive words) were assigned accordingly.

Ellemers, Van Rijswijk, Roefs, and Simons (1997) extended these findings by demonstrating that while each group tends to favor its own members, a social reality is present to those involved in neither group. The authors had each member of a high-status group and a low-status group each assign positive and negative traits to their group and the other group. Outsiders created the traits by assessing both groups, meaning that these traits were supposed to be more indicative of one group or the other. A second set of positive and negative traits was added to this mix that belonged to neither group.

Low-status members acknowledged the higher-status group's superiority. However, the low-status members were still more likely to ascribe positive traits to their group than were the high-status group. Low-status group members were also more likely to assess their group in more ambiguous ways, allowing them to retain social value while not ignoring the obvious status of the other group.

A third group of individuals, who were members of neither group, were asked to complete the same experiment. The authors found that the outsiders' view was more like the view of the high-status group in assigning positive and negative attributes. Thus, not only do lower-status groups find ways to achieve positive social identity, but a social reality exists in which the rest of the world perceives the status of both groups.

Members of a group will not only tend to favor fellow group members during the allocation of resources (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Tajfel, 1969), but they are also more likely to cooperate with ingroup members when resources are limited or when a common enemy is at hand (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). The more competitive the activity, the more likely intergroup bias is to persist, and the more likely members of groups are to show ingroup favoritism (Brewer, 1979).

In applying these tenets to a converged newsroom, it would seem that journalists would be more likely to share information with other journalists who work in the same medium. Print reporters would seem reticent to share tips with broadcast reporters, especially if they retain an "us" and "them" attitude regarding their former competitors (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Bantz (1985) argued that there is a desire for conflict embedded in the psyche of news operations, which fosters the sense of competition among workers from opposing news organizations. Given the organizational demand to be the best, the situation can become win-lose. Given the way in which media outlets tie rewards to the volume of scoops garnered by each staff member, the journalists can become territorial and competitive with both external news organizations and colleagues, he stated.

Even in a converged environment, being beaten by a competing news outlet remains a great fear for the individual journalist. Because news itself cannot be copyrighted, the dissemination of information on one medium can allow the converged operation's competition to engage in "news piracy" (Sullivan, 1978). This is why journalists in newsrooms across the country often assign reporters to monitor the competition for bits of information that the news agency might have missed. Because both print and broadcast journalists measure their worth in terms of scoops, it is likely that medium-based identities would persist. Unless there was a way to create a new identity under which "us" and "them" became a more inclusive "we," the converged newsrooms be more like the one discussed by Hammonds, Petersen, and Thomsen (2000) than the idealized models outlined by convergence proponents.

Drawing on the research compiled here regarding intergroup bias, the following hypotheses are posited:

Hypothesis 1: Print and broadcast journalists will rate a plan to converge a newspaper, television station, and online news organization more positively if they perceive the plan to have been created by members of their ingroup than if they perceive its source to be that of an outgroup.

Hypothesis 2: Print and broadcast journalists will rate a group that proposed a plan to converge a newspaper, television station, and online news organization more positively if they perceive the group to be comprised of ingroup members than if they perceive it to be comprised of outgroup members.

Hypothesis 3: Participants would rate a convergence plan more negatively when viewing it in the context of their newsrooms than when they view it as happening somewhere else.

Methodology

A sample of 300 broadcast and print journalists was drawn from newsrooms across the United States, with a 10% oversampling of broadcast journalists, bringing the total number of journalists surveyed to 315. The journalists were recruited through Internet journalism group lists, which are maintained by practicing journalists throughout the country, and through connections the author made through his years in the field of print journalism. Individuals who said they would be willing to participate were also asked to act as point-of-contact people for others in their newsroom. This allowed for more surveys to be distributed within a newsroom. Some individuals declined to recruit others, but agreed to be participants. No incentive was provided to the participants.

The journalists responded at a mean rate of about 62% (print = 60%, broadcast = 64%), for a total of 196 surveys. After removing the surveys that were less than 75% completed and the statistical outliers, 189 surveys remained for analysis (print n = 88, broadcast n = 101). Tables 1 and 2 lists the demographic variables of the participants of the study (Gender coded woman = 0, man = 1).

Journalists from 9 newspaper newsrooms and 42 television station newsrooms returned surveys. Newspapers traditionally have more journalists than do television stations, leading to the discrepancy in the number of newsrooms. The participants were required to be front-line journalists, such as reporters, videographers, line editors, producers, and on-air personnel. Members of upper management, business staffs, or technical production crew (i.e., press operators) were excluded. All of the newspapers had a circulation of 40,000 or higher. All the television stations operated in a market of 150 or larger.

None of the news organizations under consideration had undergone a massive convergence project. While some of the organizations had worked with their competitors, those who agreed to participate had not converged to the level outlined in the plan they were asked to review.

Additional potentially influential variables

Items that might influence the participants' reaction to convergence were created after examining the literature on intergroup bias (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000 for a review) and organizational change (Galpin, 1996, Marshall, 2000). Intergroup literature suggests that individuals who know outgroup members very well are less likely to be biased against them. Change literature states that people who like their jobs, fear change and value competition will not endorse policies that alter their comfort zone. Those who enjoy working with others, however, are more likely to approach change in a positive manner.

Participants rated statements that captured these concepts. Those statements, rated on 9-point Likert scales, were factor analyzed and, once the cross-loading statements were removed, six factors emerged that explained 56% of the variance. Five of the six factors were retained, with the sixth factor having an alpha level (.48) too low to retain. The remaining factors were: job satisfaction, outgroup knowledge, competition, fear of change and teamwork.

Attitudes toward convergence

Participants read a text block that defined convergence as it has been discussed in the professional literature and how it is operationalized in this study. They were then asked rate a series of statements on 9-point Likert scales that dealt with the attitudes they held toward convergence. Nine items were factor analyzed, and, after removing all cross-loading items, two factors emerged. The first factor contained four items (alpha = .84) and explained 40% of the variance. It dealt with the ways in which convergence can improve the quality of news. The second factor contained two items (alpha = .61) and discussed the ways in which convergence can be used to harm a newsroom.

Manipulation: Presentation of the plans

Participants read a plan to converge a print and a broadcast newsroom and were asked to rate the plan and the group that created it. The levels of approval of the plan and the group that were ascertained by having the participants rate a series of statements regard the likeability of the plan and group and feasibility of plan implementation. These items were crafted by examining credibility literature (Gaziano & McGrath, 1996; McCroskey, 1966). The source of the convergence plan was manipulated, with participants receiving one of three forms of the survey. The source was said to be either a small committee of print journalists, a small committee of broadcast journalists or a small committee composed of both print and broadcast journalists. Equal numbers of these surveys were created, with equal portions of each manipulation being sent to print and broadcast journalists. Participants were randomly assigned to their conditions. A manipulation check, which asked participants to recall which group created the plan, was included here.

The statements that assessed the plan and the group that created it were factor analyzed. Two factors clearly emerged, which accounted for 66% of the variance: group credibility (33%; alpha = .88) and plan credibility (33%; alpha = .89).

Participants were asked to rate the plan a second time, using the same items but imagining that it would be implemented in their newsroom. The purpose of this section was to assess a change in their attitudes if the plan were to directly affect them. The same sets of items that measured plan approval (alpha = .87) and group credibility (alpha = .92) in the previous section were used.

Results

Prediction of reaction to plan based on intergroup bias

Hypothesis 1 states that print and broadcast journalists will rate a plan to converge a newspaper, television station, and online news organization more positively if they perceive the plan to have been created by members of their ingroup than if they perceive its source to be that of an outgroup.

Hypothesis 2 states that print and broadcast journalists will rate a group that proposed a plan to converge a newspaper, television station, and online news organization more positively if they perceive the group to be comprised of ingroup members than if they perceive it to be comprised of outgroup members.

To test these hypotheses, the variables of plan approval and group approval were examined based on the intergroup conflict manipulation variable.

Descriptive statistics of plan and group approval

Participants all appeared to hold a neutral view of the plan, regardless of whether they were told it came from ingroup members, outgroup members, or a mixed group. Participants also rated the group that created the plan as neutral across the three manipulations. (see Table 3)

Potential mediators and their impact on plan and group approval

To assure that the variables being tested were not unduly influenced by demographic variables or other variables that had been shown to mediate approval of organizational change, a series of first-order correlations between the dependant variables and the potential covariates were examined. After extracting only the variables that demonstrated significant correlations with the plan and group approval variables, two linear regressions were run to ascertain which variables should be retained for use in a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Of the variables used in those regressions, only gender and positive convergence outcomes were found to significantly predict plan or group approval. These variables were retained as covariates for subsequent analyses.

Testing the impact of intergroup bias on plan and group approval

To ascertain whether intergroup bias impacted the approval of the plan or the group that created it, a MANCOVA was conducted. Plan and group approval served as the dependent variables and the intergroup conflict level (ingroup, outgroup or mixed group) served as the independent variable. Gender and positive convergence served as the covariates. An examination of the Wilks' Lambda demonstrated that the MANCOVA was not significant ($p > .05$).

An examination of the mean scores showed that the ingroup was rated lower than both the outgroup and the mixed group. This seemed unusual, given that at least one previous study (Filak & Thorson, 2002) clearly demonstrated a penchant for intergroup bias between print and broadcast journalists. In that study, both print and broadcast journalism students rated their career field and their medium more positively than they rated the medium and career field of their outgroup. An examination of the message source manipulation check in this study provided a possible explanation.

Although the groups were clearly identified in both the plan manipulation and the statements the participants rated, almost 55% of the respondents answered the manipulation check incorrectly. It was possible that the manipulation did not impact the participants' view of convergence or that they attributed the plan to a group based on their social biases (see Coleman & Thorson, 2002).

To assess whether the perceptions of the group would cause changes in the assessment of the plan and the group, the manipulation check was used to create a new variable. This variable, perceived intergroup, was created by comparing the participants' group to the group they perceived to be responsible for creating the plan. For example, if a print journalist selected the "broadcast" item on the manipulation check, perceived intergroup would be coded as "outgroup." If the participant chose "print," it would be "ingroup." Of the 189 cases, 13 failed to answer the manipulation check, leaving 176 cases ($n = 176$) to be examined. (See Table 4)

The MANCOVA was attempted a second time, using perceived intergroup as the independent variable. This time, the Wilks' Lambda was significant ($p < .0001$). The individual ANOVAs were each significant (Plan: $F= 11.42$, $p < .0001$; Group: $F= 9.31$, $p < .0001$).

A series of planned contrasts demonstrated that individuals who perceived the plan to be created by the outgroup were less positive about the plan and the group that created it than those who perceived it to be created by their own group. The mixed group ratings were also significantly higher than those for the outgroup. There were no significant differences between the ingroup and the mixed group. Based on this analysis, hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

Impact of immediacy on plan and group approval variables

Hypothesis 3 stated that participants would rate a convergence plan more negatively when viewing it in the context of their newsrooms than when they view it as happening somewhere else. To test this, a paired-samples t-test was used, comparing the plan approval and group approval variables to the immediacy plan approval and immediacy group approval variables (See Table 5). The t-test demonstrated a significant more negative rating for both the group ($t = 4.52$, $p < .0001$) and the plan ($t = 4.83$, $p < .0001$) when participants rated the plan in terms of their own newsrooms. Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Discussion and conclusion

Previous studies have argued that journalists are defensive of their culture, preferring not to alter their surroundings. This study took that information and posited an answer as to why.

The participants here demonstrated patterns of intergroup bias. They rated a plan to converge two newsrooms more positively if they thought it was not being imposed upon them by outgroup members. Attempts to shape the source of the messages as being from either members of the ingroup, members of the outgroup, or members of a mixed group were unsuccessful. The journalists ignored the manipulation and made source attributions as they saw fit.

This, however, helped demonstrate that the perceived source of the message was significant in determining how positively or negatively participants would rate the plan. Journalists who perceived the plan to have come from an ingroup member rated it more positively than those who perceived the plan to have come from an outgroup member. In a mixed group condition, journalists were also more positive toward the plan than those journalists who perceived it to have come from outgroup members. The participants also rated the group that created the plan more positively if they perceived it to have some ingroup representation. Those journalists who thought the group was comprised of outgroup members rated the group less positively than those who believed it was comprised of either solely or partially of ingroup members.

Finally, journalists were less likely to be positive toward that plan if they thought it would immediately impact their newsroom, further solidifying the findings of other studies that journalists do not like to change. Organizational research has argued that anxiety, fear of change, competitive fires, and other such variables can affect how a worker perceives change. None of those variables were significant predictors in this study.

The idea of culture in a workplace setting is not new, but this study does argue that change itself is not the catalyst for fear. If journalists feared only the change in their workplace rituals, they would have rejected the plan clearly and vehemently in each stage of this study. Instead, participants were more positive toward the change when it appeared to come from people they saw as more like them.

Media professionals who hope to converge newsrooms must be aware of this intergroup conflict. Even if a plan to converge newsrooms is well thought out and beneficial to all concerned, the perception that it is the work of outgroup members can damage its standing with workers. If members of both groups are not involved in creating a convergence plan, those who are left out of the planning are likely to reject the plan. The mixed-group condition rated significantly higher than the outgroup condition. Thus, journalists do not necessarily need to exclude the outgroup to be happy with the outcome of a convergence plan. They do, however, need to feel that they had some say in this endeavor.

By knowing and understanding the reasons for this sense of dislike and distrust, media professionals hoping to create converged newsrooms can look to research on intergroup conflict for solutions. Researchers in psychology have found several ways to decrease intergroup bias. They have found that certain tasks and goals diminish bias among previously competitive groups. This study demonstrated that print and broadcast journalists fall into an intergroup bias pattern. The solutions found by other researchers should be applicable in newsroom settings to improve the transition from two news operations to one.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics of Broadcast Journalists

		Gender	Age	Number of years at current job	Number of years in news total
N	Valid	101	101	101	101
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		.55	31.25	3.88	8.91
Std. Deviation		.50	7.92	4.14	6.89

Table 2: Demographic Statistics of Print Journalists

		Gender	Age	Number of years at current job	Number of years in news total
N	Valid	88	88	88	88
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		.49	33.53	6.18	10.66
Std. Deviation		.50	9.73	6.84	9.04

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Plan and Group Approval Based on Plan Source

Descriptive Statistics

	Plan Source Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Plan Approval	Ingroup	5.0	1.8	68
	Outgroup	5.0	2.1	55
	Mixed Group	5.3	1.9	66
	Total	5.1	1.9	189
Group Approval	Ingroup	4.4	1.4	68
	Outgroup	4.6	1.5	55
	Mixed Group	4.7	1.5	66
	Total	4.6	1.4	189

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Intergroup Variable

	Perceived Intergroup	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Plan Approval	Ingroup	5.7	1.5	34
	Outgroup	4.3	1.9	79
	Mixed	5.9	1.8	63
	Total	5.1	1.9	176
Group Approval	Ingroup	4.9	1.3	34
	Outgroup	4.0	1.5	79
	Mixed	5.1	1.3	63
	Total	4.6	1.5	176

Table 5: Means Comparing Plan and Group Approval to Plan and Group Approval (Immediacy)

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Plan Approval	5.1	189	1.9	.1394
	Plan Approval (Immediacy)	4.7	189	1.9	.1401
Pair 2	Group Approval	4.6	189	1.4	.1043
	Group Approval (Immediacy)	4.3	189	1.6	.1143

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Running head: Updates in Online Newspapers

Newspaper

Keep Up with Time:

Top Story Updates in Seven U.S. Online Newspapers

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Abstract

By examining the number, frequency, type and time of updates, the research intends to answer if and how new media has changed the news cycle of online newspapers. Data consist of updates recorded in twenty real time observations, 24 hours each, where top stories were continuously monitored at 12-minute intervals. The findings are: most update top stories more than once a day; updates are made frequently; there are four types of updates; updates are made round-the-clock. It is concluded that the online newspapers have departed from traditional daily news cycle and they are publishing original content.

Keep Up with Time:

Top Story Updates in Seven U.S. Online Newspapers

In 2000, the percentage of homes with Internet access exceeded the percentage that subscribes to a daily newspaper[1]. Newspapers can no longer afford to focus solely on their legacy platform. As *New York Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. said, "Newspapers cannot be defined by the second word—paper. They've got to be defined by the first—news."[2] The consumer decides how to consume news, on the printed page or on screen. An efficient news organization should serve both media platforms equally well[3]. As the marriage between traditional news organizations and the Internet becomes more established, news consumers are accepting the online product[4]. The number of online news consumption is rising. According to a recent survey by Pew Internet & American Life project, the audience for online news has grown substantially since 2000, from 52 million to 82 million by October 2002[5].

One of the transcendent advantages of Web-based news is ease of content change, making it a preferred medium for breaking news. It is also possible to repackage and constantly update news stories[6]. This will affect news delivery and news consumption, raising expectations about the speed of coverage[7]. Online news sources combine breaking news with deep insight to feed the audience with round-the-clock content, an Internet analyst at Nielsen/NetRatings said[8].

The emphasis on timeliness underscores the most fundamental change that online capability brings to the newspaper business[9]. Its ability to think more like a 24-hour news radio station and less like a once-a-day news source has attracted a growing audience[10].

As more and more office workers log on to read national, local, and business news, traffic to major online news dailies is going up, especially when big events dominate headlines[11].

How have these changes defined the practice of online newspapers? Some have put "update ticker" on their homepages and some even in individual stories, assuring readers of the most updated stories. Researches in academia have produced a few initial and conflicting results. However, none of the researches used real-time observation that reflects the dynamic changes of the top stories in newspaper Websites. This study is designed to fill in the gap by continuously monitoring seven newspaper Websites and collecting real-time changes that mirror actual updates (if any). The focus is on how newspapers on the Web update top stories.

Literature Review

The central issue under study is concerned with how the Web has changed the traditional daily news cycle in online newspapers. Related previous studies include how new media changes news reporting practice, changes in audience expectation, and newspapers' response to changed technology and expectation.

Contemplating the effect of new media on news, Pavlik[12] suggested that as real-time medium, the Internet will alter journalism practices, as always the case with technology, which influences, constrains and structures the way journalists work. The speed and computer format of real-time news delivery will have effect on newsgathering and news writing practices. Stories will be shorter and built in several takes. They will be disseminated immediately. This is in sharp contrast with traditional practice of integrating information into a single story[13]. Some scholars are calling attention to "the pressures that are transforming the goals, tools, professional standards and sociopolitical function of the major journalistic media,"[14] An example of such transformation is real-time financial news. It may become the model for future, more general, computerized news services.

New media has made news content ubiquitous. Audience will have access to more news and information as news sources are increasingly viewing themselves as content providers who can publish their own content without a traditional journalistic publisher or gateway. Besides, many online news ventures original to the Internet have been able to take much greater advantage of the capabilities offered by new media[15]. News aggregators collect and organize news stories from a variety of sources and update constantly. For example, Google News selects stories and photos, groups them together by topic, and generates a fresh news page every fifteen minutes[16].

Newspaper sites were found to be shovelware – "scooping up the old flat text used in the ink-on-paper product and throwing it on the screen."[17] They dumped anything they could online, as fast as they could, with little customization. The result, according to media futurist Roger Fidler, quoted in a 1995 Editor & Publisher story: "Online publications are still uncompelling, frustrating and time-consuming to use."[18] That was what Pavlik[19] referred to as stage one of online news content evolution, where online journalists mostly repurpose content from their mother ship. With the speed of development of the online world in mind, it was long, long time ago.

News organizations know that audiences for online news will be drawn by a site's unique content and quality. Their appeal will depend on how they adapt and apply new media. Journalists began to create original content and augment it with hyper-links, interactive features, and a degree of customization.[20] In a study published in 1999, a survey of online editors found that 43 percent of the respondents said that their online version differed from the printed version either by giving an expanded in-depth coverage or limiting the number and length of stories displayed. Half of the online papers surveyed updated their Web edition more than once a day.[21] This is in line with another survey of 29 online newspapers, which reported that half created unique materials. Hypertext links are the most common additions among the changes. Other changes include headlines, photos or artwork, structural modifications and wording.[22]

However, in an article published in 2002, Barnhurst[23] found that U.S. newspapers on the Web simply reproduce the substance of their print editions, usually changing nothing in the text of the stories. With exception of a few, neither do they add hyper-links, images, or interactive resources. As a result, stories online differ very little from those printed in the originating papers. The author concluded that print publishers use their Internet presence as a low-cost placeholder to guard their U.S. market position and erect a barrier to the entry of geographical competitors and ideological alternatives in the U.S. news arena.

For those that produce original content, it seems that the amount of original content produced online is directly related to the size of online staff, which is a function of circulation of the print paper. Singer and Tharp[24] reported in their 1999 study of U.S. news operations that online staff size increases with circulation size, but with considerable variation. Small staffs and the lack of time to do things right are problems many online editors face, threatening their ability to keep their sites current and accurate.

These studies suggest that the development of new media has made it not only, feasible but also essential for online newspapers to update news content as frequently as needed. So do readers expect. In response, some have geared up to live up to the expectation, especially large ones. However, with regard to whether online newspapers are producing original contents, the results are inconclusive. They were contradicting each other because they were skewed by their methodological approaches. Studying randomly sampled stories or surveying online editors can only provide part of the picture. Studying real-time performance of online newspapers will fill in the gap.

Research Questions

As used in this study, update is broadly defined as change that makes the subsequent version of a story different from its previous version. It not only includes update in content, but also stylistic and mechanic modifications like choice of words and/or corrections.

We focus on updates of top stories because they are the most responsive to the dynamic news environment. Print daily newspapers have daily news cycle, normally updating once a day. Online this may change. The first question is:

RQ1: Besides normal daily updates, do online newspapers publish additional updates to top stories?

Updates to top stories can be one of two changes, changes to the mix and lineup of the top stories and changes to individual ones already published. When a breaking story is posted, the mix and lineup of top stories will be revised. The revision will be reflected in update at headline positions. On other occasions, published stories are updated, referred to as update to individual story in this paper. Question one explores whether new stories are introduced and whether old one are modified to keep their content up to the moment. If the answer is positive, the study intends to find out some interesting characteristics of these updates and thus questions two to four.

RQ2: How many and how frequently are updates made?

RQ3: What types of updates can be identified?

RQ4: At what time of day are updates made?

Method

Sample and sampling procedure

Purposive sampling was used. Websites of seven newspapers were selected, namely *Chicago Sun Times*, *Houston Chronicle*, *New York Daily News*, *Mercury News*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post*[i]. These newspapers were selected from a list of top 100 newspapers in the U.S., published in 2002 by Editors & Publishers. Three criteria of selection were used: large circulation in print version, no requirement for login and from different geographical area (e.g. northeast, middle west, etc).

To study updates of top stories it is important to regularly and continuously sample the sites for the top stories of specific moments. Top stories are identified as headlines in the homepage or news front page of an online newspaper site. As headlines may change, we watched headline positions during the sample collection. A headline position is a fixed place in the homepage or news front page where a headline is found and the story is accessed via a link. It is usually fixed in the layout of the online newspaper, which is relative stable (see figure 1). Once the layout is set, we can always

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[i] They can be respectively accessed at: http://www.suntimes.com/index/news.html, http://www.chron.com/, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/, http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/, http://www.sfgate.com/chronicle/, http://www.usatoday.com/news/digest.htm, http://www.washingtonpost.com.

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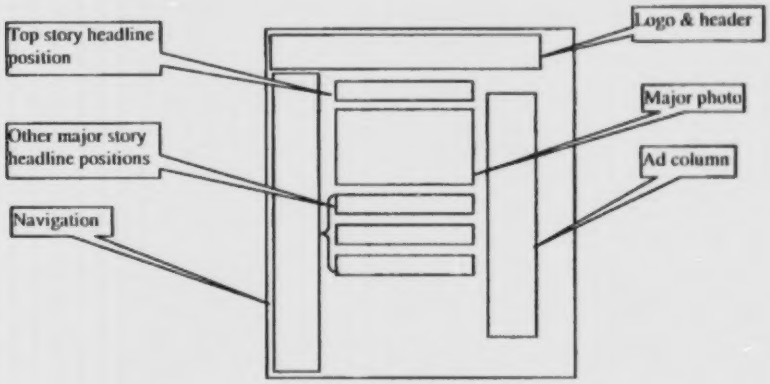
go to the same place to find the headlines of the moment, such as first headline, second headline, and access the corresponding stories. Besides, there is regularity in the names of the links to top stories, which was employed as complementary means to identify top stories. If there is change in one specific headline and its story, subsequent sampling will detect and note it. Depending on how many top stories a site puts out, between six and twelve headline positions in each site were monitored.

Figure 1 Typical layout of online newspaper site


Top story headline position
Other major story headline positions
Navigation
Logo & header
Major photo
Ad column

A change in top story is detected when subsequently sampled story is compared with the previous story in the corresponding headline position. In real-time, one of the four situations applies at a headline position: first, both headline and story change -- a different story is published; second, neither headline nor story changes – no update is made; third, only story changes – update is made to the story; and fourth, only the wording of headline changes – update is made to the homepage headline but not to the story accessed via it. The last situation was outside the scope of this study and was ignored. The first three situations were captured by comparing the subsequent story with the corresponding previous one. Thus, the real-time data collection used in this study was

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to continuously sample stories of up to twelve headline positions, five times an hour at regular twelve-minute intervals. Except the first (which was just saved according to its corresponding headline position), each time a story was obtained it was compared with the previous one in the same headline position. If change was detected it was saved on local disk for further analysis. Otherwise, it was discarded.

The twelve-minute granularity was chosen as the result of two preliminary studies of updates. As change can be made at any time, the smaller the granularity the more accurate the result. In practice, however, small granularity produces too many checks at the web sites and other technical difficulties. A pilot study of two sites was conducted to determine the granularity, at thirty- and fifteen-minute intervals. Both pointed to smaller granularity, thus twelve-minute granularity. To catch frequent changes in volatile situations, smaller granularity may be desired but that was not within the scope of this study.

Considering the daily news cycle of print newspapers, the data collection was done automatically in disconnected 24-hour periods, in which 120 times of sampling were performed. Meanwhile, a log was kept to record the time of collections, the numbers of same and different stories, their names and other information. The periods were randomly selected and spread over a period from September 2002 to January 2003. Data that fell short of the 24-hour observation requirement due to disruptions were discarded. Altogether, 480 hours of real-time performance of the online newspapers was captured in the data.

Data processing and data analysis

Before analysis, the collected stories were cleaned, removing all extraneous strings of symbols except the essential components, the title, subtitle, lead and body.

Update is detected in comparison made on paragraph level. It detects addition and/or deletion of paragraph(s), sentence(s) or word(s), change of number(s), punctuation(s) and other symbol(s) as well as change of order in any of those. Addition or deletion of white spaces was not counted as change and was ignored.

In order to study both update at headline positions and update to individual stories, two types of comparisons were made — one on the consecutive stories of the same headline positions and the other on the consecutive stories of the same titles. Update, if any, in the subsequent story from the same headline position was detected by comparing it with the previous story at the same headline position. Update, if any, in the subsequent story with the same title was detected by comparing it with the previous story of the same title. The minutes that elapsed before a change was made was taken as time between updates. Distinct stories were counted based on titles.

Findings

Four findings can be reported: (1) six newspapers made additional updates to top stories during 24-hour periods, (2) the number of updates and time between updates varied greatly, (3) four basic types of updates could be identified and (4) in some sites updates may be made any time during the day.

Answer to question one is positive. Additional updates were found in six of the seven sites. Question two is answered in two analyses, update at headline positions and update to individual stories.

Update at headline positions

Table 1 gives number of updates per headline position, time between updates and breakdown of update numbers in first three hours. Updates at headline positions were recorded for six of the seven sites. Because of the variation in the number of headline positions we used update per headline position as a measure, which shows the average number of updates recorded at a headline position during 24 hours. A value greater than one indicates additional updates. The greater the value, the more updates. Time between updates is a measure that indicates the average number of minutes passed before a changed story came up. It is an indicator of how frequently on average the story at a headline position is changed. The smaller the value, the more frequently a change is made. As a different indicator of frequency of change, breakdown of the update number shows the number of updates made within three selected time intervals, the first, second and third hour, and that within the first twelve minutes (the smallest possible time slot recorded in the data). Table 1 shows that there is a great variation in the updates at headline positions, from approximately 1.7 to 14 per headline position. So is the time between updates, from approximately 107 to 693 minutes. It also shows that many updates took place within the first three hours.

TABLE 1

NUMBER, TIME AND SELECTED INTERVALS OF UPDATES AT A HEADLINE POSITION

	Number of updates per headline position		Time between updates		Breakdown of the number of updates		
	mean	stddv	mean	stddv	1st hour*	2nd hour	3rd hour
suntimes.com	4.1	2.0	378.4	277.1	1.11(.37)	.8	.45
chron.com	9.0	4.5	157.3	118.9	4.58(1.5)	1.6	.83
bayarea.com	14.1	6.2	113.7	59.2	7.8(3.47)	2.69	.91
nydailynews.com	1.0	.0	-	-	-	-	-
sfgate.com	1.7	.7	740.4	341.0	.17(.05)	.11	.18
usatoday.com	10.1	5.7	137.3	71.2	5.01(1.71)	1.7	1.12
washingtonpost.com	14.2	6.2	105.5	64.6	8.93(4.05)	2.17	1.13

* Number in parenthesis indicates the part attributable to the changes made within first twelve minutes. For example, 1.11(.37) means that out of 1.11 changes made within one hour, .37 are made within the first 12 minutes of the first hour.

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Table 1 shows that washingtonpost.com, one of the industry's showcase newspaper, was the best performer. Not only did it have the most updates, 14.2 per headline position, it also excelled in frequency of change, with 8.93 out of the total of 14.2 made within one hour since the last change. Even more impressive is that 4.05 were made within twelve minutes. Variation is large, as reflected in standard deviation. Some headline positions are much more active that others. Day of week is also a contributing factor to the great variation.

Variation also exits among the sites. Sfgate.com is the site with least updates. Updates took longer to come up. The only site that reminds us of the old daily news cycle is nydailynews.com. It invariantly sticks to its once-a-day schedule.

Two leading causes for updates at headline positions are turnout of new stories with possible reshuffle of old ones and updates to individual stories. A single breaking story may cause as many changes as the number of headline positions being monitored by initiating a series of pushdowns or one single change by replacement. Alternatively, a posted story may be updated, with no new story produced. This dynamics is reflected in headline position turnout, a measure that shows the average number of distinct stories a headline position produces during 24 hours (see Table 2). A value greater than two shows that extra stories were produced. The greater the value, the more extra stories. A value between one and two indicates that some stories stay longer than 24 hours.

Update to individual stories

Update was not made to every distinct story. A story that is updated at least once after it is published is termed as breathing story. The percentage of breathing story indicates what portion of distinct stories is updated, ranging from zero percent to one hundred percent (see Table 2). A value greater than zero shows existence of breathing stories. The greater the value, the bigger the portion.

TABLE 2

HEADLINE POSITION TURNOUT AND PERCENTAGE OF BREATHING STORY

	Headline position turnout	Percentage of breathing stories
suntimes.com	2.48	6.2
chron.com	3.01	31.2
bayarea.com	4.91	5.3
nydailynews.com	2	0
sfgate.com	1.98	22.2
usatoday.com	2.8	34.6
washingtonpost.com	3.92	28.2

Five of the seven sites had values greater than two for distinct story turnout, ranging from 2.48 to 4.91. Usatoday.com tops the list in percentage of breathing stories, with 34.6 of distinct stories updated. At sfgate.com, the average distinct stories turnout is 1.98, less than 2, which is normally expected if a site "publish an issue" once a day.

A breathing story may be updated more than once. Table 3 shows average and maximum numbers of times of updates, average time between updates and breakdown of updates within first three hours. The greater the mean for number of updates, the more updates on a breathing story. The less the mean for time between updates, the more frequently updates were made. The values in breakdown column are average number of times made in different hours. We read in the first row, for example, out of an average of 1.4 times of updates made to a breathing story, .85 was made in the first hour, .36 in the second hour, .06 in the third hour, and the rest 1.3 made in the hours between 4th to 23rd (not tabulated). They are alternative indicators of how frequently updates were made.

TABLE 3

AVERAGE, MAXIMUM AND SELECTED INTERVALS OF UPDATES PER BREATHING STORY

	Times of update			Time between updates		Breakdown of the times of updates		
	mean	stddv	max	mean	stddv	1st hour*	2nd hour	3rd hour
suntimes.com (N = 33)	1.4	1.0	5.0	83.7	90.4	.85(.36)	.36	.06
chron.com (N = 176)	1.7	1.9	16.0	67.4	79.4	1.24(.48)	.28	.11
bayarea.com (N = 56)	1.6	.8	4.0	113.5	204.9	.89(.32)	.48	.04
nydailynews.com	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
sfgate.com (N = 81)	1.2	.5	4.0	150.6	95.8	.27(.12)	.17	.38
usatoday.com (N = 150)	2.3	2.7	16.0	86.3	90.1	1.57(.68)	.37	.16
washingtonpost.com (N = 232)	2.1	2.2	16.0	81.6	80.5	1.59(.72)	.23	.07

* Number in parenthesis indicates the part attributable to the updates made within first twelve minutes. For example, .85(.36) means that out of .85 updates made within one hour, .36 are made within the first 12 minutes of the first hour.

Table 3 shows that a story could be updated as many times as 16, with average ranging from 1.2 to 2.3. It also shows that up to 1.59 times of update may be made within one hour.

With regard to research question three, four types of updates were identified for breathing stories: addition, deletion, partial and total swaps. Update by addition refers to modifications where new paragraph(s) is (are) added to the previous story. Deletion means that some paragraph(s) is(are) cut out from the previous story. In partial swap, new paragraph(s) is(are) added and some old one(s) cut out. When every paragraph in the subsequent story is different from those of the previous one, it is total swap. A breathing story falls into one of the types. Table 4 gives a breakdown in percentage.

TABLE 4

BREAKDOWN OF UPDATE TYPES

	Update by type			
	Addition	Deletion	Partial swap	total swap
suntimes.com (N = 47)	8.5	6.4	70.2	14.8
chron.com (N = 301)	5	18.3	71.1	5.7
bayarea.com (N = 87)	3.5	4.6	71.3	20.7
nydailynews.com (not applicable)	-	-	-	-
sfgate.com (N = 94)	3.2	0	92.6	4.3
usatoday.com (N = 344)	5.2	1.5	84.6	8.7
washingtonpost.com (N = 489)	5.7	4.7	89.2	<1

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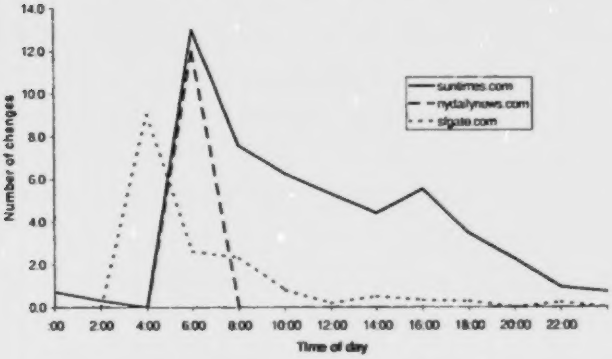
GRAPH 1

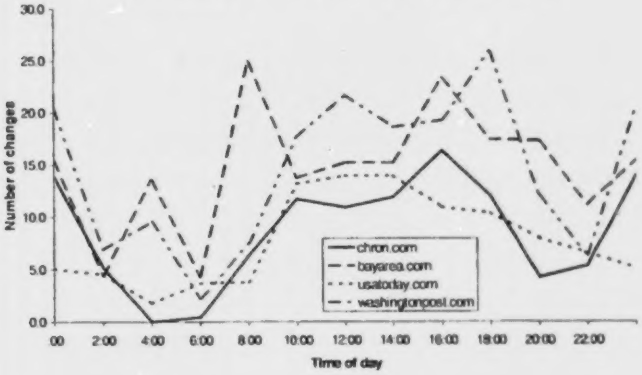
PAPERS WITH LEAST UPDATES AT HEADLINE POSITION



As to research question four, updates to top stories were made throughout the day in six of the seven sites, with most made during daytime. Considerable variations existed. The sites were divided into two groups based on number of updates, that with least updates and that with most updates. The numbers for each site were summed at intervals of two hours and plotted in Graphs 1 to 4.

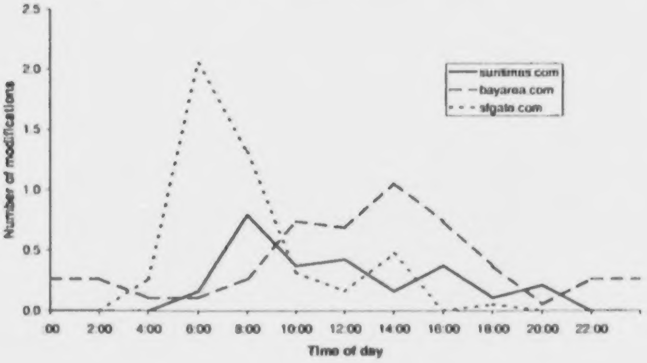
GRAPH 2

PAPERS WITH MOST UPDATES AT HEADLINE POSITION



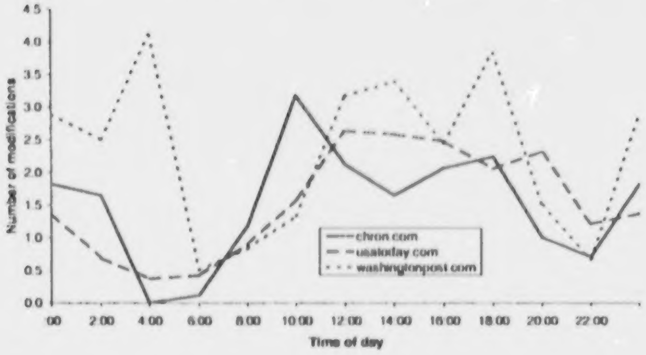
In the graphs some patterns can be observed. With regard to story updates at headline positions, the peaks in the early morning in Graph 1 indicate that sites with least updates did most of the updates in early morning hours. This reminds us of the daily news cycle of morning newspapers in print. Once new stories for the day were posted, they were mostly done. On the other hand, sites with most updates (See Graph 2) did most between eight in the morning and eight in the evening. Updates might pop up at any hour throughout the day, although there are highs and lows.

GRAPH 3
PAPERS WITH LEAST STORY UPDATES



With regard to updates to breathing stories, the difference is not as big. No clear pattern exists among the sites with least updates, except that most were made between 6:00 a.m. to 16:00 p.m.. The values are small but adequate to suggest when these sites are most likely to publish updates. An updated story may come online round-the-clock at bayarea.com but not at suntimes.com and sfgate.com. Their "office hours" were between 4:00 am to 22:00 pm, and 2:00 am and 16:00 pm, respectively. However, at the sites with most updates, a majority were made between 10:00 a.m. and 20:00 p.m., with highs also around mid-night and in early morning. They were made round-the-clock although there were two apparent lows. (Graphs 3 and 4).

GRAPH 4
PAPERS WITH MOST STORY UPDATES



Discussion

The findings suggest that news cycle has been shortened in six of the online newspapers studied. Clear evidence is produced that they update top stories in addition to once-a-day update. Changes to the lineup of top stories and/or to the paragraphs of the top stories may take place throughout the day.

There can be two types of update, reporting breaking stories and keeping the content of individual stories fresh. Evidence for reporting breaking stories comes from the findings that: (1) the values for the turnout of headline position are greater than two at five of the sites, (2) the values for update at headline position are greater than those for update to breathing story and (3) new stories may pop up any time during the day. The reasoning is that if there is one update a day, as is the case with nydailynews.com, only two stories are to be found per headline position, an old one and a new one that replaces the old one sometime during the 24-hour period. When a headline position turns out an average of more than two, this suggests that extra stories are posted. Posting new stories also causes change in the lineup of top stories. Therefore, updates at headline positions are greater than those to breathing stories. As these changes are scattered and may happen any time, it is likely that the extra stories are breaking stories.

It can also be inferred that six of the sites are updating the content of individual stories. Support for this comes from the following findings: (1) the existence of breathing stories, (2) the greater-than-one values for updates per breathing story and (3) a breakdown of types of update to breathing story. As is defined above, a breathing story is one that has been modified at least once after it is posted. This suggests that update to individual story is made. Some may be updated a number of times, as suggested by greater-than-one values for updates per breathing story. However, as update can be either as a result of content update or mechanic change like error correction, the two indicators above alone are not sufficient to point to content updates. Therefore, we bring in update types. When new paragraph(s) is (are) edited in or old ones edited out, the editing is likely to be on the content, especially when a number of paragraphs have been worked on.

When the sites report breaking story and/or update content of individual story, they are publishing original content that may not appear in their respective print versions of the day. The findings that a majority of updates involve introducing new and cutting out old paragraphs suggest that the sites are responding to the changing news environment. Besides, the round-the-clock nature of updating top stories is an additional support. It doesn't make sense to work on the stories from the print paper all day long without introducing new stuff.

The result of this study is consistent with the survey researches reviewed above in that it has produced evidence to support the claims of the editors. It is also consistent with previous findings that the online versions of large newspapers are more likely to produce original content. As this study focuses on top stories only, it may also be consistent with the result reported by Barnhurst in that he focuses on the whole site, where top stories are just a small portion of what has been published by online newspapers. While top stories may change frequently, other features may not and look exactly like those found in the print paper.

Limitations and Further Research

One limitation is that the results for update to individual story should be interpreted as an approximation only. Both reporting breaking story and updating individual story are a rolling process (as Graphs 1 to 4 clearly indicate). An arbitrarily defined period of 24 hours of data collection may be short, not able to capture all the subsequent updates to a breathing story. Those with longer time intervals may fall outside the data collection period, especially for those posted before or toward the end of the period. They are underrepresented in the collected data. With this limitation in mind, we are advised to interpret these results with caution. The average and maximum numbers of updates set the lower bounds, meaning updates to breathing stories will be made at least as many times as the numbers indicate. The breakdown of the average number of times of updates in three time intervals sets the upper bound, meaning that the numbers indicate the maximum numbers of modification that could be made in these respective time intervals.

Further research may be pursued in three directions. First, we can look into the actual update to individual story and categorize them in terms of content update and mechanic changes. Considering that a large number were made within short time intervals, it is interesting to find out what causes all these modifications. How is content updated? What are the types of mechanic changes and how many? An answer may contribute to our understanding of some of the important issues in news service online, such as speed and breadth, speed and quality.

Secondly, it is interesting to look into life expectancy of various news stories and explore possible relationship between life expectancy and number of updates and, more importantly, between life expectancy and stories of different content areas. What types of stories get what attention and how are they developed? An answer may contribute to our understanding of theoretical issues, such as framing and agenda setting.

Third, it is interesting to compare newspapers on the Web with broadcast on the Web. In the shared platform, how do the products of traditional media adapt to new media? What legacy practice have they brought over? An answer may help us understand and predict the future direction of online news.

Conclusion

Throughout newspaper history, "timely" has been defined in the context of creating a daily product. But the Web has changed this. A continuous observation of performance of seven U. S. online newspapers indicates that six of them have departed from the news cycle schedule of print papers. They report breaking stories and update the content of individual stories. In some sites these are done round-the-clock.

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Partisan and Structural Balance in News Stories Covering Incumbent and Open Elections for Governor in Michigan

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A paper submitted to the Newspaper Division of AEJMC for consideration for presentation at the annual convention in Kansas City, Missouri, July 2003.

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Abstract: Partisan and Structural Balance in News Stories covering Incumbent and Open Governor's Races in Michigan

A comparison of news stories about Michigan gubernatorial races 1998 and 2002 shows that the open race in 2002 was covered in a more even-handed way than the 1998 election, in which an incumbent sought reelection. The proportion of stories favoring the challenger was much higher in 1998 than was the proportion favoring either major candidate in 2002. An equal proportion of stories on the 2002 election favored each candidate.

Moreover, individual stories in 2002 were more likely to be constructed to give more equal space and prominence to electoral opponents. A gender difference was found in the coverage of the 2002 governor's race, in which one candidate was the first woman nominated by a major party. Specifically, male reporters wrote more stories giving more attention and space to the male candidate; the opposite was true for stories by female reporters.

INTRODUCTION

Candidates in elections attempt to promote the agenda of issues and personal qualities they think will lead to success. Candidates attempt to get this agenda covered by the news media so that they can effectively mobilize their supporters and persuade undecided voters. Candidates do this in a variety of ways that include issuing position papers, giving speeches, holding rallies and participating in debates.

The normative assumption of democracy is that voters consider the competing claims of candidates and support those with whom they most agree. But this assumption requires that voters are first exposed to the views of candidates, particularly through news media coverage of their campaigns.

Correspondingly, the normative assumption for news organizations covering an election is that they report competing partisan claims in a fair and impartial manner. Obviously such news media coverage will depend on numerous factors specific to each election. Certainly too, the qualities and activities of candidates can draw journalistic attention differentially. And journalistic attention may also differ as a result of differences in news organization resources and in the qualities of its reporters.

This study therefore explores factors that are both extrinsic and intrinsic to the manner in which news organizations cover elections. Outside the control of the news media is the incumbency or challenger status of the candidates themselves, and the differential way in which they can “create news” that must be covered. But qualities of the news organizations and their reporters will also influence the election coverage, especially the priority given it by editors and the specialized training and experience reporters have in covering government.

This study has two goals in examining such treatment. First, this study assesses the partisan and structural balance of the election coverage to determine objectively how even or uneven it was. The partisan balance of ~~stories~~ coverage considers whether the aggregate of all stories on the election gave more space and attention to one or the other candidate. The structural balance of ~~stories~~ coverage considers whether individual stories likely to be encountered by readers gave more space and attention to one or the other candidate. Partisan balance therefore addresses actual bias — whether intended or not — in the total coverage of an election, while structural ~~bias~~ balance addresses the chance that readers may perceive bias — whether actual or not — depending on how the individual stories they encounter present the candidates.

Second, this study assesses influences on the partisan and structural balance of the news coverage. Specifically, the study compares results of two elections that differ in the incumbency status of the candidates to determine how that societal factor may have influenced the partisan and structural balance of news coverage. Guided by previous research, the study also attempts to assess how differences in news organization resources and newsroom norms also influence such partisan and structural story qualities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Incumbency and News Coverage

Clarke and Evans in a benchmark study of media coverage of congressional elections noted that incumbents are much more likely to get favorable press attention, whatever their party.[1] Specifically, the coverage of incumbents emphasized their experience and qualifications, while the coverage of challengers dwelled on their campaign weaknesses and problems. Clarke and Evans pointed to possible explanations for this pattern that included the incumbents' routine access to the press, the increasing saliency of incumbency as party identification has declined, and the ability of incumbents to render newsworthy service to their districts.

In a study to extend that research, however, Fico et. al. suggested that incumbency advantages vary with the level of the election.[2] Specifically, they noted research by Miller that found press attention varying with the size of the constituency an official served, and suggested that coverage of higher-level elections might differ from coverage of more local ones.[3] The Fico et. al. study of a U.S. presidential race, a U.S. Senate race, 18 congressional races and 18 statehouse races in Michigan found predicted incumbency advantages in press coverage at the congressional and statehouse levels, but not for the U.S. Senate and presidential races.

Moreover, Fico and Cote found in subsequent studies of coverage of elections for governor in Michigan in 1994 and 1998 that stories gave much more space and attention to the Democratic challengers than to the Republican incumbent.[4] They further found in a study of 1996 elections that Republican challengers for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. presidency were given more story space and attention than their Democratic incumbent opponents.[5]

However, studying network news coverage of 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, Lowry and Shidler explicitly tested the notion that incumbents get more critical attention than challengers because the incumbents' track records provide targets for criticism.[6] Their data, they concluded, was more consistent with an interpretation of network liberal bias against Republican candidates, whether they were incumbents or challengers.

Certainly blatant political bias on the part of news media organizations and personnel is possible. But it also is plausible that reporters give challengers more attention than incumbents in high-level elections because of the importance of the office, especially if the views and experiences of challengers are less known to the public. Challengers also may get more attention because they deliberately shape their campaigns to match news values for activity and drama, with the result that they get more coverage. However, when Fico and Cote asked reporters following the 1994 governor's election to assess their own coverage, reporters did not cite such a rationale for their greater attention to the challenger in that race.

Influences on Election Coverage

A number of societal, news organization and reporter qualities may influence stories covering an election. In particular, these influences may affect the degree to which stories are more or less even-handed in their treatment of electoral opponents.

Shoemaker and Reese posit that news content is the product of influences at five levels, with each higher level constraining lower-level influences.[7] At the societal level, factors such as ideology, legal political arrangements and other institutions constrain what the media can do. The kind of media organization, its resources and its goals will in turn constrain the actions and routines of its personnel. At the news organizational level, resources and goals will influence the numbers of staff available and how they are deployed. Within the news organization, editorial rewards and sanctions reinforce the routines, norms and values that reporters follow. And finally, the personal characteristics of the individual journalists will influence how they recognize news values, search for sources, and write their stories.

This research applies this hierarchy-of-influences approach to election story space and attention given candidates. At the societal level, the media must respond to the operation of the political process in how it covers elections, including the incumbency or challenger status of the contenders and the differential attention they can command. At the organization level, staff resources available to cover an election influence the qualities in the resulting stories. All other things equal, the more staff a news organization has, the more thoroughly it will be able to search out and use sources that may result in more even-handed and in-depth treatment of controversy such as elections. Moreover, organizational resources will determine whether reporters can be assigned to specialized bureaus that permit them to cover stories in more depth and with more attention to different source perspectives. Fico and Cote found that staff size was related to the deployment of reporters to more specialized bureaus, and that such bureau stories were more even-handed than others in their coverage of the 1998 governor's race candidates.

Within newsrooms, one of the most salient cues editors can give reporters for the qualities they seek in stories is prominent placement. Prominen~~ce~~t story placement means prestige for the reporter. But prominent story placement also means that stories get more public scrutiny, and possible criticism for lapses in perceived fairness. Tuchmann has called the news media concern for getting "both sides" in a controversy a "strategic ritual" to avoid criticism from partisans.[8] Editors designating stories for Page One presumably would seek adherence to such a ritual, and communicate that concern to reporters. Moreover, over time, reporters would observe the qualities of stories on Page One, and model their own story sourcing and writing accordingly. Fico and Cote found in studies on the 1996 presidential race the 1998 governor's race that more prominently placed stories tended to be more even in their treatment of candidates.

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Few studies have used this hierarchy-of-influence approach to define variables and the

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interrelationships among them that may govern news story balance in treatment of contending viewpoints on some controversy. This approach can help build mass communication theory because it provides a logical and structured framework for a cohesive research program into identifying direct and indirect influences on media content. Identifying such influences and the way they operate could make it possible to explain and predict future coverage characteristics. Even more, this approach could identify those factors that could be deliberately monitored and changed by news personnel to better control and shape their coverage.

The research cited above suggests the following societal-level hypotheses relating the incumbency status of the candidates to election coverage:

H1: Election stories covering an open race will be more even in their partisan balance than election stories covering a race with an incumbent.
H2: Election stories covering an open race will be more structurally balanced than will stories covering a race with an incumbent.

Moreover, this research presents an opportunity to replicate results from previous studies with hypotheses that relate newsroom-characteristics to qualities in election stories:

H3: Stories written by statehouse bureau reporters will be more even in their partisan balance than stories written by other reporters.
H4: Stories written by statehouse bureau reporters will be more structurally balanced than will stories written by other reporters.
H5: Stories given more prominent placement will be more even in their partisan balance than will stories given less prominent placement.
H6: Stories given more prominent placement will be more structurally balanced than will stories given less prominent placement.

The 2002 election in Michigan was unprecedented because a woman was a major party's nominee for governor for the first time. In the Shoemaker-Reese hierarchy of influences on news content, reporter perspectives and biases associated with gender would be the kind of individual-level influences that should be constrained by newsroom norms and values. However, reporters have considerable gate-keeping power in the way they search for and use sources in stories. Possibly, then, male and female reporters differed in the partisan and structural balance of stories they wrote on this election. Hence:

RQ1: Did stories written by male and female reporters differ in their partisan balance?
RQ2: Did stories written by male and female reporters differ in their structural balance?

METHOD

The 2002 governor's race in Michigan pitted Republican Lt. Gov. Dick Posthumus against Democrat Jennifer Granholm, the state attorney general. Posthumus easily defeated a challenge by a state senator to win his party's nomination. But Granholm had to win a hard-fought, three-way primary campaign against a former Democratic governor and a well-known U.S. representative. In the general election, Granholm consistently led in the polls, and she won in November with 51 percent to Posthumus' 47 percent (minor party candidates obtained the remainder of the vote).

A content analysis was conducted of all news stories on this election in Michigan's nine largest dailies, and the results compared with those from an identically conducted study in 1998.[9] The study newspapers account for the vast majority of daily circulation in the state, and ranged in circulation from more than 50,000 to more than 300,000.

The election stories included in this study ran from the Labor Day start of the official campaign to Election Day in November. The individual story was the unit of analysis. Editorials, columns and letters-to-the-editor were excluded, as were "Q&A"-type stories in which candidates were quoted at length in response to prepared questions.

Stories were first read to see if they contained quoted or paraphrased assertions from the candidates and their supporters.[10] The number of sources making such assertions in support of each candidate was counted. The total number of paragraphs of assertions attributed to these sources was counted, as well as their location in each story.

Partisan and Structural Balance Measures

These dependent variable measures were identical to those used in previous research by Fico and Cote. Four components of each election story were assessed and were used to create indices for partisan and structural balance.

The first component was determined by counting the total paragraphs containing assertions supporting Granholm or Posthumus, to see if either candidate got more. The second component identified whether the first paragraph lead of the story contained assertions supporting Granholm alone, Postuhumus alone, both candidates or neither candidate. The third component identified whether assertions supporting only Granholm or Posthumus appeared in paragraphs two through five, or whether those paragraphs contained assertions for both candidates or for neither. The fourth component similarly identified whether assertions supporting only Granholm or only Posthumus, both or neither, appeared in paragraphs six through ten.

To create the partisan balance index, each of these components was first judged to favor Republican Posthumus, to favor Democrat Granholm, to be balanced (because support assertions for both candidates were equally present in the component) or to be irrelevant (because no support assertions were present). The candidate favored by the most components was therefore judged to have been favored by the story. For example, a story would be judged the most imbalanced possible toward Posthumus if it gave him: (a) more total paragraphs of space than the opponent; (b) an assertion in the lead, but not the opponent; (c) at least one assertion in paragraphs two through five, but not the opponent; and (d) at least one assertion in paragraphs six through ten, but not the opponent. The story would be judged the most balanced possible if it gave identical space and assertion placement to each candidate in each of the four components. The story could also be judged as balanced if candidates "split" the components (for example, both candidates obtained an equal number of story paragraphs, only Granholm partisans made an assertion in the lead, only Posthumus partisans made assertions in paragraphs two through five, and neither candidate's partisans made assertions in paragraphs six through ten).

To create the structural balance index, the four components were used to determine the **degree** to which the same candidate dominated the story, regardless of who that candidate was. To assess this, the number of components favoring the Republican was subtracted from the number of components favoring the Democrat, and then the absolute value of that number was used. The resulting index could range from 0, indicating a story structurally balanced between the two candidates (and also balanced on the partisan index), to 4, indicating that the **same** candidate was favored on each of the four components.

Validity and Reliability of Balance Measures

The balance indices clearly give more weight to the prominence of story attention to candidate assertions. This notion of balance is therefore "reader driven," in that a story in which one candidate's positions are presented first and then the opponent's may not be perceived as balanced by readers who leave the story before the second candidate's perspective is presented. The validity of this approach to assessing balance, therefore, depends on the assumption that stories are read from the top down, and that readers have a greater likelihood of encountering candidate assertions when they are higher rather than lower in a story.

A two-person coder reliability assessment for this study's balance measures was performed on approximately 10 percent of stories sampled from all relevant ones. All component variables had percentage of agreement scores between 90 and 100 percent and Scott Pi scores that ranged from .9 to 1.0.

Explanatory Variables

Explanatory variables used in this study include the type of reporter, the prominence of story placement and the gender of the reporter. Reporter type was determined by bylines, which identified reporters as being regular staff, assigned to the newspaper's Capitol bureau, working for Associated Press or working for another other news service. Reporter gender was determined from bylines, but news organizations also were called to determine whether a reporter was male or female when the name was ambiguous. Stories that carried no byline were coded as of unknown gender origin. Story prominence was ranked on a three-point scale, in which the least prominent story ran on an inside page, the next most prominent story ran on a section front page and the most prominent story ran on Page One.

Analysis of Data

Hypotheses and questions on the partisan balance of stories were assessed using the proportions of all stories that favored Posthumus, Granholm or were evenly balanced (as measured in this study) between the two. Hypotheses and questions on the structural balance of stories were assessed by computing the balance for each story and then getting the mean balance score for stories relating to reporter type, prominence and reporter gender. These data are from the universe of election stories and do not require inferential statistics for generalization.

RESULTS

Some 275 stories were included in this study because they focused on the governor's race of 2002, and 266 of them contained partisan assertions and were therefore analyzed further. About a third of the stories were produced by regular staff, another third by newspaper statehouse bureau reporters and the final third by Associated Press (30 percent) or other news services (3 percent). About six in 10 stories ran inside, while 32 percent were displayed on Page One. About 57 percent of the stories were written by male reporters and 36 percent by female reporters. The genders of the reporter producing 7 percent of the stories could not be determined.

Election Type and Balance

The 266 stories containing partisan assertions in 2002 were compared with 400 stories containing such assertions in 1998. Overall, the election coverage in 2002 was more balanced in both partisan and structural dimensions, as assessed by measures employed in these studies.

Hypothesis 1 predicting that stories would be more evenly balanced between the two candidates in 2002 than in 1998 was supported (see Table 1). The percentage of stories supporting the Republican and Democrat in 1998 differed by 16 percentage points, compared to a 1 percentage point difference in 2002. Interestingly, nearly equal percentages of stories in both years were evenly balanced between the two candidates.

Hypothesis 2 predicting that the 2002 stories would be more structurally balanced than those in 1998 was also supported (see Table 2). Some 53 percent of the 2002 stories were either the most balanced or were imbalanced by only a single component, compared to 38 percent of the 1998 stories that were the most balanced or were imbalanced by only a single component. Moreover, only 21 percent of the 2002 stories were imbalanced by as many as three or four scale components, compared to 37 percent of the stories in 1998. Finally, the average imbalance of stories in 2002 was 1.61 compared to 1.98 in 1998.

Influences on Balance

Stories on the 2002 election were assessed to determine the influence of reporter type, story prominence and reporter gender on partisan and structural balance.

Hypothesis 3 predicting that stories produced by statehouse bureau reporters would display more partisan balance was not supported (see Table 3). Bureau stories differed in their favoring of Posthumus and Granholm by 10 percentage points, a bigger spread than for any other type of reporter except the "others."

Hypothesis 4 predicting that stories produced by statehouse bureau reporters would display more structural balance was partially supported (see Table 4). Statehouse bureau stories were less imbalanced structurally than those produced by regular staff and "other" reporters, but were not less imbalanced than stories produced by Associated Press reporters.

Hypothesis 5 predicting that more prominently placed stories would display more partisan balance than less prominently displayed stories was not supported (see Table 3). Page One stories showed the greatest difference between the two candidates, while section front page stories exhibited the least. A greater percentage of Page One stories was balanced between the two candidates, compared to the percentage of balanced stories run inside or on section front pages.

Hypothesis 6 predicting the more prominently placed stories would be more structurally balanced was supported (see Table 4). Page One stories had the least structural imbalance, followed by section front page stories and stories that ran inside.

Gender and Balance

Research Question One asked if reporter gender was associated with any difference in the partisan balance of stories. In general, male reporters wrote more stories in which Posthumus was given more space and prominence, while women reporters wrote more stories in which Granholm was given more space and prominence (See Table 3). Interestingly, stories balanced between the two candidates made up the same proportion of stories written by male and female reporters.

Research Question Two asked if gender made any difference in the structural balance of stories. Differences in structural balance of stories produced by male and female reporters were much less pronounced than was the case for the partisan balance of stories (See Table 4).

However, a more striking reporter gender difference existed in the structural balance of stories favoring Posthumus and Granholm. In general, stories favoring Granholm had more balance components dominated by her partisans than was the case for stories favoring Posthumus (see Table 4). However, this difference was largely the result of stories written by female reporters that favored Granholm. Specifically, the difference in the structural balance scores of stories favoring Posthumus and Granholm written by female reporters was three times that difference for stories by male reporters. For female reporters, that difference favored Granholm, while for male reporters the much smaller difference favored Posthumus.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Results from this study give emphasis to the societal context within which news organizations cover elections. Although each electoral campaign at each electoral level can be unique, the incumbency or challenger status of the candidates will be an important influence on the balance of stories written about it. Results from this research show that at least for high visibility elections, challengers are likely to get more attention in stories than incumbents. When an incumbent is not on the ballot in a high-visibility election, stories are more likely to "balance out" in the total attention given candidates, and individual stories are also more likely to present both candidates in a more even way.

This research, however, has severe limitations in method and in the scope to which it may be relevant. A content analysis cannot, for instance, illuminate actual biases that journalists may have that in turn may bias stories in ways not measured in this research approach. Moreover, this sample is limited to the largest daily newspapers in one state, and while patterns found in this study may be more broadly present, study replication will be needed to substantiate this. Future research therefore should specifically examine challenger and incumbent elections in a number of states. Within states, such elections might also be tracked across time, as this study has done.

Other influences require surveys and focused interviews to explore. For example, do reporters and editors intentionally give more space and prominence to the views of candidates they deem likely to lose? If this is so, do they see this as an effort to be fair in a broader social sense? Moreover, in an election in which an incumbent is running against a challenger, do reporters and editors attempt to compensate for the incumbent's office-holding ability to "make news" by giving less attention to the incumbent's campaign more attention to challengers?

Moreover, results from this study may not be applicable to broadcast media. Indeed, the findings from this research contradict a network election study that explicitly tested and refuted the notion that challengers get more favorable attention. However, it may be that this contradiction exists because the present research objectively measured space and attention to candidates, rather than judging qualitatively the tone of the attention. Future research should adapt the present partisan and structural balance measures to incumbent and open elections covered by broadcast media. Further, more qualitative assessments of story tone could supplement these measures in studies of both print and broadcast election coverage.

This research mostly replicated findings from previous studies that found that the institutional status of reporters influences the structural (but not partisan) balance of election stories. Statehouse bureau reporters were more likely than their newsroom-based colleagues to write individual stories that gave more even treatment to electoral opponents. Surprisingly, however, wire service reporters were equally likely to do this, contrary to expectations from previous research. Possibly this is the result of unique influences on Associated Press coverage in this state, and replication is needed to illuminate stable patterns in wire service coverage.

Prominent stories were more balanced structurally, and the assumption in this research is that editors influence reporters to give more even space and attention to candidates when stories are likely to get more reader attention. However, it could be argued that the influence works the other way — that well balanced stories are perceived by editors to be better stories, and therefore more worthy to be given prominent display. Still, such a process of editorial judgment would have the effect of influencing reporters over time to produce more structurally balanced stories.

The reporter gender differences found in this study are striking. Again, this result may be unique to the specific election and its circumstances that these reporters covered. However, it is clear that journalistic norms and values do not always take precedence over the individual characteristics and values of reporters. Future research will be needed to determine if male and female reporters routinely cover candidates of their gender differently.

Obviously too, many other influences on story partisan and structural balance have not been taken into account in the present research. But the hierarchy-of-influence approach suggested by Shoemaker and Reese provides a structured and logical framework for carrying out the research program of studies necessary to fully explore influences on specific aspects of election coverage. Even more, as such influences are illuminated, news media managers may be able to use such knowledge to better shape coverage to better serve their audiences.

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6. Dennis Lowry and Jon Shidler, "The Sound Bites, the Bitters and the Bitten: A Two Campaign Test of the Anti-Incumbent Bias Hypothesis in Network TV News," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75 (1998):719-729.

7. Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* 2nd ed. (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1996.)

8. Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 660-679.

9. Newspapers analyzed were the *Saginaw News*, the *Macomb Daily*, the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, the *Lansing State Journal*, the *Oakland Press*, the *Flint Journal*, the *Grand Rapids Press*, the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*.

10. Assertions were quoted or paraphrased statements explicitly linked to candidates or their supporters with verbs of attribution indicating speaking such as "said," "stated," "charged," etc. Verbs denoting the states of mind of candidates or their supporters (e.g., "feels," "thinks," "believes," etc.) were also considered assertions when it was clear that such state-of-mind verbs were merely being used as synonyms for speaking verbs such as "said."

Although assertion position and length were assessed for each story, the study did **not** assess the tone of the coverage in any qualitative way. This is a difference from other research in which tone of coverage is judged to be "positive," "negative" or "neutral."

Table 1: Partisan Balance of Stories on the 1998 and 2002 Governor's Race in Michigan
(Percentage of Stories favoring the Republican and Democrat)

	1998	2002
Favors Republican	35%	42%
Favors Democrat	51%	43%
Balanced	14%	15%
Story N	400	266

Table 2: Structural Balance Scores of Stories on the 1998 and 2002 Governor's Race in Michigan
(Percentage of Stories balanced or imbalanced toward one candidate*)

		1998	2002
Most Balanced	0	14%	16%
	1	24%	37%
	2	25%	27%
	3	23%	14%
Most Imbalanced	4	14%	7%
Story Average		1.98	1.61
Story N		400	266

*The higher the Structural Balance score, the more imbalanced the story is in its treatment of the candidates.

The most balanced story would give equal paragraph space to assertions supporting both candidates, as well as including quoted or paraphrased assertions from partisans for both candidates in the story lead, in paragraphs two through five, and in paragraphs six through ten.

The most imbalanced story would give such attention to only **one** of the candidates.

Table 3: Partisan Balance of Stories on the 2002 Governor's Race in Michigan, by Story Origin, Story Prominence and Reporter Gender (Percentage of Stories favoring the Republican and Democratic candidate).

	Favors Republican	Favors Democrat	Balanced	Story N
Story Origin				
Newspaper Staff	44%	48%	8%	87
Newspaper Bureau	46%	36%	19%	92
Associated Press	39%	41%	20%	79
Other	13%	75%	13%	8
Story Prominence				
Inside Page	46%	42%	12%	155
Section Front Page	41%	44%	16%	25
Page One	36%	43%	21%	86
Reporter Gender				
Male	47%	37%	16%	152
Female	35%	50%	16%	97
Can't Tell	35%	53%	12%	17

Table 4: Structural Balance Scores of the 2002 Governor's Race Stories in Michigan, by Story Origin, Story Prominence, Story Partisan Balance and Reporter Gender*

	Story Score	Story N
Story Origin		
Newspaper Staff	1.94	87
Newspaper Bureau	1.45	92
Associated Press	1.44	79
Other	1.63	8
Story Prominence		
Inside Page	1.74	155
Section Front Page	1.68	25
Page One	1.37	86
Reporter Gender		
Male	1.62	152
Female	1.56	97
Story Partisan Balance		
Favors Republican	1.58	112
Favors Democrat	1.96	113
Balanced	NA	41
Reporter Gender By Partisan Balance		
Male		
Favors Republican	1.99	72
Favors Democrat	1.84	56
Balanced	NA	24
Female		
Favors Republican	1.53	34
Favors Democrat	2.06	48
Balanced	NA	15

*Higher scores indicate more story imbalance favoring one of the candidates.

Newspaper

Perceptions of the Audience by the Alternative Press Producers: A Case Study of The Texas Observer

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Abstract

The study tests ideas about how the alternative press relates to its audience, comparing this with previously published literature about how mainstream media relate to their audiences. This study interviewed nine former and current producers in the Texas Observer to ask about their perceptions of the audience. Through interviews with staff members, the study concludes that the staff's connection with its readers is closer than is usual for mainstream media and that the readership is politically active. Most of the producers distinguish the general public from their readers who are seen as more active in political or social issues in Texas. Even though the readers of the Observer are seen as a subset of the general public, the readers of the Observer are seen as more active in regional, national politics, and community issues.

Introduction

Mass communication researchers have pointed out that mainstream media producers do not know their audiences: Although media producers have a vague image of the audience, they pay little attention to it; instead, they write for their superiors and for themselves, assuming that what interests them will interest the audience (Gans, 1979. p. 230). Media producers think that they know best how to combine the available factors of production without actually consulting the audience (McQuail, 1994. p. 232). In this sense, media producers are "suggesting the equivalence of professional and lay reactions" (Gans, 1979. p. 237). Why are media producers' perceptions of the audience important in the communication process? As McQuail (1969, p. 75) states, media producers' perceptions of their audiences play an important role in "shaping the content of what is communicated, and the consequent need which the communicator experiences to know his audience if he is to communicate effectively."

Studies of alternative media have focused on aesthetics (layout, language, non-political themes), internal organization (self-managed structures[1], finance) (Downing, 1988; Atton, 2002). By alternative media, I mean the media that cover news events that are not ordinarily reported in the mainstream media. In this sense, such alternative media may help to legitimate the lives of ordinary people as news. The alternative media, generally small-scale and in many different forms, "express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities, and perspectives" (Downing, 2001: v). In addition, alternative media serve a specialized readership, listeners or viewers.

How has the audience been imagined by alternative media producers? Few studies have examined the ways in which alternative media producers conceived of their audiences. Are alternative media producers' perceptions of the audience different from what the literature on mainstream media producers' knowledge of their audience shows? (Gans, 1979; Atkin, Burgoon & Burgoon, 1983; Dewerth-Pallmeyer, 1997). These researchers argued that communicators do not know their audiences. In my research, I came across just one such study – that of Nina Eliasoph who examined the production of oppositional news at KPFA-FM radio station in Berkeley. Her study shows that this alternative radio station views their audiences as a constituency needing information in order to act.

To find out how alternative press producers view their audiences, I interviewed 9 former and current staff members of the alternative press, the Texas Observer, to examine the producers' perceptions of their readers and its news production process. The study tests ideas about how the alternative press relates to its audience, comparing this with previously published literature about how mainstream media relate to their audiences. Through in-depth interviews with producers at the Observer, I investigate how producers at the alternative press view their audiences and examine whether the audience of the alternative press is seen, as Eliasoph (1997) suggests, as a constituency – mobilized, active, and needing information to act on an issue that concerns the audience. Her study shows that the producers at the alternative radio station view their audiences as active in community issues and political process.

My research question comes from the Texas Observer's mission statement, which reports that it writes about issues ignored or underreported in the mainstream press. The goal of the Observer is to cover stories crucial to the public interest and to provoke dialogue that promotes democratic participation and open government. I investigated the following research questions: 1) How do producers in the alternative press perceive the audience? 2) Do other alternative media have the same perception of the audience as shown in Eliasoph's study of the alternative radio station? 3) Are alternative media producers' notions of the audience different from what the literature about mainstream media producers' knowledge of the audience shows? In the next sections, I will examine how the news production process of the mainstream media is different from the news production process at the alternative media

The Organizational Structure of Mainstream Media

We can describe the process of media production as individual level, media routines level, organizational level, and the level of external constraints. News gatekeeping, at the individual level of media production, explains how the communicator controls the flow of news content according to his/her subjective individual judgment.

However, communicators are subject to the occupational setting, which limits the subjectivity of news judgment. This organizational production setting includes the media production routines, the journalists' relationships with other reporters, and sources, as well as occupational socialization.

Media routines are patterned, repeated practices. The organizational routines facilitate the news production, as well as help journalists get established news categories. Usually media routines correspond to media workers' socialization in the organization, and are derived from constraints which shape the news production.

The production of mainstream media should also be considered in relation to its news sources because sources influence media content in several ways. The media tend to rely on official institutions and press releases as sources to get a convenient and regular flow of information. Since many sources compete for a limited space, the news involves a selection bias, which will lead to the dissemination of official, prominent voices to the audience. Media reinforce prevailing definitions of situations while rendering viewpoints outside the mainstream irrational and illegitimate (Reese, 1997. 426). Consequently, mainstream media are acted upon by the power structure rather than acting on, or initiating a change in a biased system. As a result, the mainstream media serve to secure the interests of the socially influential class by excluding the voices of socially marginalized groups. In the next section I will explain about the news production process at the alternative press.

The Organizational Structure of Alternative Media

What is the organizational structure of the alternative media? How are the alternative media financed? What is the news production process in alternative media? First of all, alternative media are open to lateral communication between media producers. "For if we are thinking of organizing democratic media, we cannot imagine them as liberating forces unless they are open to lateral communication between social beings, with their multiple experiences and concerns" (Downing, 1984. 19). The alternative media challenge mainstream media by providing their audiences with alternative interpretations of reality. Additionally, the alternative media are independent of both business interests and the State and have links with popular, political and union movements without being organically tied to them (Raboy, 1984. 127). The alternative media are much more likely to put the emphasis on ordinary people rather than newsmakers. It is explanatory rather then event-oriented, works to a different time-scale for writing stories. The alternative media also try to include as many voices in the media and provide a place for new writers to have their ideas published.

In addition, the alternative media are free of any control by commercial interests since it is supported by individual donations, subscriptions, and grants. The alternative media, non-institutional, committed media favor horizontal patterns of interaction between senders and receivers (McQuail, 1994). The alternative media, not a part of the administrative and commercial system, can have a political impact by allowing the people to participate directly in public communication or, "as in the case of projects advocating alternatives to conventional wisdom, because the programmatic character of their activities sets examples through which they implicitly contribute to public discussion" (Habermas, 1997. 454).

It is important to know that the practical possibilities of alternative media programming are for a group of audience members not simply to broadcast, but to broadcast what they want to communicate, both within their own ranks and to a wider audience (Downing, 2001. pp. 327-328). The alternative media attempt to break into the established mediascape, "elbowing their way into a fissure where their own voices can have a presence in the public realm" (Rodriguez, 2001. p. 165). In this sense, "alternative media spins transformative processes that alter people's senses of self, their subjective positionings, and therefore their access to power" (Rodriguez, 2001. p. 18).

As Downing (2001, p. 16) states, alternative media "have a mission not only to provide facts to a public denied them, but to explore fresh ways of developing a questioning perspective on the hegemonic process and increasing the public's sense of confidence in its power to engineer constructive change." Alternative media can play a significant role in leading to a constructivist change in a society. As Scott (1985, p. 285) states, "resistance is a carefully balanced affair that avoids all-or-nothing confrontations."

As Downing expresses:

> Resistance, in other words, is resistance to multiple sources of oppression, but in turn, it requires dialogue across the varying sectors – by gender; by race, ethnicity, and nationality; by age; by occupational grouping – to take the effective shape (2001, p. 19).

Alternative media should serve as a catalyst in this process by serving overriding purposes: "to express opposition vertically from subordinate quarters directly at the power structure and against its behavior; to build support, solidarity, and networking laterally against policies or even against the very survival of the power structure" (Downing, 2001. p. xi).

As I indicated, there is a significant difference in the organizational structure and role of the mainstream media and alternative media in terms of finances, writing styles, and news sources. Because of these differences, it is important to ask whether producers in mainstream media and alternative media have different perceptions of the audience. In the next section I will investigate how producers in the mainstream media and the alternative radio station constructed their audience.

Media Producers' Perceptions of their Audiences

The impact that communicators' perceptions of their audience have on producing the news has been examined over the past several decades. Mass communication researchers (Darnton, 1990 & Gaunt, 1990) argued that communicators do not know their actual audiences. Schlesinger stated that "total audience remains an abstraction, made real on occasion by letters or telephone calls, encounter of a random kind in public places, or perhaps more structured ones such as conversations with liftmen, barmen and taxi-drivers" (1978, p. 107). Journalists 'prefer their own informal ways of coping with uncertainty, especially by way of self-constructed audience images and personal contacts' (McQuail, 1994. p. 210). Pool and Schulman argue that "audience has a clear impact on the journalistic product. The audience or at least those audiences about whom the communicator thinks play more than a passive role in communication" (1959, p. 145). On the other hand, Gans (1979, p. 237) argues that communicators see their audience as being like themselves and therefore consider themselves as audience representatives. This is derived from the point that "most journalists take the congruence of their own and the audience's feelings for granted."

There is also an institutional perspective on the audience. According to Ettema and Whitney, "in an institutional conception, actual receivers are constituted--or perhaps, reconstituted--as institutionally effective audiences that have social meaning and/or economic value within the system" (1994, p. 5). Ryan and Peterson (1982) define media producers' primary task as creating media product since journalists are mainly concerned with news gathering and crafting stories. On a daily basis, journalists typically have little time to ponder how well they are communicating with an audience. Therefore, communicators' knowledge of their audience is gained while they are performing their task without conscious deliberation (Dewerth-Pallmeyer, 1997, p. 15). However, the image of the audience constructed by the producers is not uniform. According to Dewerth-Pallmeyer (1997, p. 84), "audience imagery is real among journalists and is a powerful input constructing the news, but it is not uniform. Much is tacit and embedded within the routines and values of news gathering." The above comments are on mainstream media, against which I am going to compare the findings of the current study on alternative press.

How do producers in the alternative media perceive their audiences? I found just one study by Nina Eliasoph who examined the production of oppositional news at KPFA-FM, the Pacifica radio station in Berkeley. Eliasoph (1997, pp. 247-248) says that where mainstream media producers see the audience as consumers, at KPFA the audience is viewed as a constituency needing information in order to act.

She used participant observation in the KPFA radio station to find whether oppositional news reporters use the same journalistic conventions mainstream reporters use and whether such conventions may not be a source of media complacency but an oppositional news reporting tool. She found that news reporters at KPFA did use the same literary conventions mainstream news reporters use but that the conventions are a source of an oppositional tool. According to her, KPFA depended on officials, but KPFA's officials often came from the oppositional organizations such as the Sierra Club and unions (Eliasoph, 1997. p. 237). Especially she found a different relationship between radio listeners and producers. At KPFA, the audience is seen as a "constituency, mobilized, active needing information in order to act" (Eliasoph, 1997. p. 248). KPFA's audience includes people working on AIDS, South Africa, Central America, gay and lesbian issues, labor, environment. Radio news headlines address public issues on which social activists are working.

Warren Bareiss (1998) analyzed audience construction at a noncommercial radio station. The article is a reconstruction by him of the "conceived audience" from 71 letters written to the station, supplemented by interviews with 25 staff members, in which the author categorizes the audience, but that he touches little on the staff members' notions of the audience.

But I have not found any studies which analyze different perceptions of the audience by alternative press producers. It would be far better to couch the importance of "knowing the audience" in normative terms—that socially responsible journalism presumes that journalism is obliged to serve the needs, interests and democratic aspiration of its audiences (McQuail, 1997).

Research Method

I chose the bi-weekly Texas Observer because it fits into the definition of the alternative press, covering news events not reported in the mainstream media. In this sense, the Observer functions as a space where the lives of ordinary people become legitimated as news. In addition, the Observer serves a specialized readership, mostly white and middle-aged people. The magazine is small with a readership of about 7,000, but scholars should beware of "gigantism in the analysis of alternative media, of dismissing the local as weightless" (Downing, 2001).

The Texas Observer is a nonprofit, biweekly journal of Texas news, politics, and culture. The Observer was founded in 1954 by Ronnie Dugger, the first editor and publisher of the Observer, and a group of Texas Democrats. Dugger, who was intensely interested in politics and government, "wanted the weekly newspaper to wake up the people of the state" (Cole, 1966. p. 2). This group of liberals took over a publication called East Texas Democrat and made it into the Texas Observer.

The Observer did investigative reporting about political corruption at the capitol, a topic that had received little media attention up to that point. The Texas newspapers of the time did not provide particularly in-depth or wide-ranging coverage. So, the Observer wanted to try to write about politics, integration, and civil rights in the state.

Over the years, it has continued to track those issues. The Observer has evolved as those issues and the nature of Texas politics evolved.

I used the in-depth interview with media producers at the Observer to ask them about their views of their audiences, as well as their experiences in working at the press. The in-depth interview provides natural contexts of meaning production between the interviewer and respondent. In-depth interviews allow the interviewer to explore "the expressive richness of respondents' own language" (Lindlof ,1995, p. 164). By asking the same set of questions of all interview respondents in the same order, the in-depth interview minimizes the interviewer effects on interviewees and produces greater efficiency in gathering information (Lindlof, 1995. p. 172). Before the interview, I explained participants "clear, succinct, and honest reasons why they have been contacted, the aims and values of the project, and how the interview will be conducted" (Lindlof 1995. p. 181).

The Texas Observer is a bi-weekly magazine. The magazine's section includes feature articles, editorial, and books and the culture. The magazine's circulation is around 7,000. Staff members include the three editors, the managing publisher, the circulation manager, the development director, and the graphics designer. This study interviewed nine former and current producers in the Texas Observer to ask about their perceptions of the audience. Personal interviews with producers were conducted over a five-month period, from September 2001 to January 2002. I tape-recorded the interview with media producers, with their permission. I followed pre-formulated interview questions.

The following are the questions I asked in the interview. How would you characterize the readers of the Observer? How large was the readership of the Observer? How would you characterize the significance of the Observer for the community? What role did the Observer perform in encouraging reader involvement in public issues? How was the Observer funded? How much contact did you have with your readers? What kinds of contact did you have? How much impact do you think your readers had on the stories that you produced? Do readers have more, less, or about the same impact as do your superiors, your owner, your competitors and/or your fellow workers? How would you describe the readers of the Observer politically in comparison with other Texans? Are they pretty much like other Texans or different? Are the public and your readers the same or not? How did the Observer operate? Please describe the process by which the Observer produced its articles? What do you know about the history of the Observer? What type of work have you done with the Observer? How did you get into this sort of work—What attracted you to it?

When I sought interviews, I mentioned that a) all the information is confidential; b) what I am interested in is the jobs communicators do and how they do them. I reassured them that interview results will be used only with their permission. I began by seeking the background information I want for each producer. The interviews took about 45 minutes. Two research questions guide the interviews: 1) How do producers in the alternative press perceive their audiences? 2) What is the news production process in the alternative press?

Interviews with Media Producers at Texas Observer

Detailed interview were with the whole staffers including the former two editors, three current editors, the managing publisher, the circulation manager, the development director, and the graphics designer. Additionally, interviews with two former editors helped me gain a comparative understanding of the current staff's perceptions and the former editors' construction of the audience. This in-depth interview examined producers' perceptions of their readers, and the operation of the Observer.

Media Producers' Characterization of their Readers: Media Producers' Perceptions of their Impact on their Readers

Among their replies; Observer readers tend to be liberal, college educated, and urban. As one current editor states, "They are pretty well-educated. They are intelligent and interested in public issues in Texas." Most are older white professionals, the editors believe. There are few minority readers or young readers. Readers are interested in public issues in Texas. Some readers live in other states who want to keep track of important political and public issues in their home state. The readership ranges from 6,000 to 7,000. Some producers think that the readers are all involved politically in their communities in some form. They participate in neighborhood groups, and associations. They regularly attend political meetings and functions and they almost always vote in the elections. Observer producers told that they do have some ideas about their audiences by meeting them in public meetings, fund-raising parties, or other functions.

Mostly, contacts with readers were through letters to the editor and telephone calls. Observer readers send emails too. However, compared with large mainstream media, the dividing line between audience and producer is not absolute. As one previous editor said, "Even our freelancers come out of our readership a lot of times. But we also tried in various ways to reach out to living, breathing readers. We had meetings here or public events." There were a few key readers who were also readers and writers.

Sometimes the Observer holds public events to reach out to other readers living in different cities of Texas. As one current editor stated, "Sometimes we'll have fund-raising parties and then we will see our readers, that sort of thing. But we don't have that much contact." But for the most, correspondence was the primary contact with readers. Letters of the readers are run in the dialogue section of the magazine. But the contacts with readers vary from one staff to another staff, as circulation manager expressed,

> They call me when they have problems with their subscription for sure. Sometimes we chat on the phone when they call about their subscription. I may talk to people with subscribing to the Observer. Sometimes they call just to ask questions about things, ask how Molly Ivins' health is. So, I guess I probably have quite a bit of contact with our readers.

One editor had a direct contact with the readers because she opens up letters from the readers. According to her, "I am the one who gets letters and comments. I go through all that. And some of the stuff are just responses that necessarily go into dialogue." The development director said, Observer readers "are probably better educated, read, care more about current events, politically active, appreciate good writing." The Observer readers are also sort of the political left and they are more liberal than other Texans and possibly more politically active, more likely to participate in democratic party politics, to vote in the primary, for example, and to take an interest in municipal and national politics. As one of the editors said, "Our readers are generally people who are really concerned about issues, government, tobacco corporations, care about folks." The readers are active in the communities, kind of more aware of political things that are happening around them, because it is a political magazine.

The Observer is an editor-driven magazine, and editors and writers write about what they think is important. In contrast to other mainstream publications, as one editor suggests, "the Observer is more of a focus, directed niche magazine that appeals to a very small segment of the population. So, we don't worry so much about pleasing everybody all the time." The owner has no impact on the Observer. According to the current editor, "We are owned by nonprofit board. The owner, there is no impact. There is a feedback between the staff and the readers." The editors expect their readers to agree with the editors' point of view. They hoped that their readers thought it was important, too. As one of the current editors expressed, "the Observer tends to change slightly with different editors that come through. I think that matters more than what the readers are after."

Media Producers' Perceptions of the Public and Audience: the Relationship between their Job and the Public

Not all staffers believe the public and the audience are the same. As one of the current editors expressed, "the public includes a more conservative type of people, people who aren't interested in reading, people who aren't interested in politics." Another producer noted, "But I know that people read the Observer just to keep abreast of what we are thinking and what the people in the magazine are writing." This staffer makes a distinction between 'our readers' and others who may read the magazine but not share its values. In contrast, our readers are more interested in political and cultural issues and they are politically more liberal. As one former editor indicated, the Chronicle, the Observer, and the Statesmen in Austin, Texas all have different audiences. The Observer readers are a small sort of left liberal progressive group who are interested in left activist politics, environmental action, and anti-war action. So readers are a small but noisy group because they tend to be activist, in contrast with the general public, who are not interested in politics and do not vote in the elections. The Observer readers are distinguished from the public by their political activism in the public issues.

Concerning the relationship between their job and the public, as one of producers stated, "we are a freer voice and alternative voice or just another voice for readers." The Observer is an independent voice or alternative voice for readers since it covers issues ignored by the mainstream media. As one previous editor said, "it contributes significantly to the public, in being sort of at the bottom of the journalistic food chain," and reporting news stories that other papers might consider insignificant but have really considerable significance. So the relationship with the public is to report those stories. So in that way, it contributes significantly to the public.

The Observer also tries to move the state in a progressive direction. As one producer says,

> I think that all the people that work here are committed to social change. And that is a big part of the history of the Observer, is trying to move the state in a more progressive direction and that is how we choose our stories.

As indicated in the interview, the role of editors is very important in deciding the relationship between the public and media producers in the Observer since the nature of Observer tends to change by different editors. Some editors put more emphasis on culture rather than political articles, whereas other editors stress the importance of the political theme in the magazine.

The Significance of the Observer for the Community

Many Observer readers are politically involved already, and some are activists. As one former editor said, "We know we had an active readership which had to be read by people who are already active in politics, whether electoral politics on one hand, activist politics, local environmental politics." The Observer sees itself as helping to keep that community informed about what the important issues are in the state today, and what's going on in different social movements around the state and the nation. As the graphic designer says, the Observer is "keeping people updated on things, issues that are coming up but they may not be aware of, and also influencing people's opinions."

The Texas Observer also encourages people to be involved in public issues by informing them of facts and trends that the readers would otherwise not find, and alternative viewpoints that are not covered by the mainstream media. As one previous editor said, "so our role is to be a very small gadfly." In this sense, the Observer provides the readers with insight into matters which mainstream media glosses over. The magazine offers counterbalance views to conservative, corporate-dominated politics. It also offers progressive news on politics in the state.

The Observer sometimes activates the audience to take action on the public issue. As the development director says,

> Well I guess, it educates people to make them want to take action on an issue, like for instance the drug bust in Tulia.[2] There is a lot of activism that came about because of that story.

It seems that editors at the Observer play the role of intellectuals/activist communicators organically integrated with the ordinary people to develop a just social order, in contrast to those intellectuals integrated with the ruling classes in a society, whose communicative labors maintain the hegemonic process of capital (Downing, 2001. p. 15).

The Observer is also a seed publication which leads the mainstream media in covering certain issues. The national media, including the New York Times picked up the Tulia drug bust story later. According to Atton (2002, p. 12), it is in the nature of such alternative media to report these emerging issues at their start, 'since it is in the nature of activism to respond to social issues as they emerge.'

As a publication that addresses issues that concern progressives in Texas, the staffers believe the Observer fills a void in Texas. But many producers hope that the magazine will interest people who wouldn't characterize themselves as progressives. One previous editor feels that the Observer chose isolation and a small-time publication instead of trying to reach out to a wider audience. He feels like that they tend to speak too much to the same people who already agree with everything they say. In this sense, he thinks the Observer needs to widen its readership.

Another important role of the Observer is in writing whether political candidates are good or bad. As one former editor says, "You can endorse a candidate without officially endorsing a candidate by just writing articles about each person. So I think in that sense its function is important." The Observer is funded principally through subscriptions. The Observer has a very limited newsstand sales and very limited advertising revenue. The other main source is fund-raising, and contributions from wealthy individuals.

What Attracted the Staffers to the Observer and What do they Do?

Most of the staffers at the Observer got into their work because they liked the political independence and especially the progressive nature of the magazine and they shared the magazine's leftist politics. Some became interested in working there because they liked the nonprofit character of the Observer. Some current editors said that the Observer appealed to them because they could write about issues that they cared about. One editor said that the Observer is a training ground for him since "this is a good place to start writing because they will take inexperienced writers and work with you to make you a better journalist." The two former editors have cultivated an intimate relationship with the Observer for a long time before joining the Observer staff. One of the staff came to work at the Observer in marketing.

About the production process of the magazine, they noted; the editors play an important role in the production of the magazine. The editors at the Observer are responsible for writing, editing and contact with freelancers. As one former editor said, editors do various kinds of work such as assigning pieces, editing, writing, paying freelancers, selecting art, commissioning art. Editors plan stories, and assign articles to freelancers and other producers respect the editors' decision.

Three editors decide how they are going to get the magazine produced, and they distribute articles and features among themselves and they also have a stable of freelance writers to whom they assign articles. The Texas Observer also invites other liberal independent voices to diversify opinions of the magazine. The Observer runs the articles of liberals whose view can further the liberal views of the Observer.

As one current editor says, "They are just prominent, well-known liberal Texans who write well about current affairs." The Texas Observer wants to be a forum for a progressive voices in Texas. The Observer has a broad spectrum of writers. The Observer tries to provide in-depth coverage on topics not covered in other publications. As one editor said, "we are asking different questions of the same sources and we are pursuing a story a bit further than the mainstream media does."

The Observer's articles sometimes have effected change in the law by the Legislature. One editor expresses, "We are not afraid to hide our stories, my stories about the drug war are always critical and I am not ashamed of that." A bill aimed at preventing the drug war was passed by the Legislature and made law in 2001. This bill requires more than just the testimony of an undercover agent officer against a defendant in a drug case (Smith, 2001, b3).

Conclusion

These interviews show how the Observer operates, how it is funded, and how the producers perceive the relationship between themselves and the readers. This alternative press tries to include as many voices in the press such as minorities, legal issues, politics, and cultural themes and provide a place for new writers who have ideas but don't get their ideas published. In addition, this alternative press is free of any control by commercial interests since it is supported by individual donations, subscriptions, and grants.

In my view, the Observer plays the role of the alternative media since it provides the readers with alternative viewpoints about the social and political issues in Texas. Additionally, as an independent liberal press, the Observer provides the progressive political news in Austin so that the readers can understand what is happening in the state politics. These interviews showed that the Observer relies upon subscriptions for funding. The Observer's source of funding is a small segment of the readers which is distinguished by its "political orientation." This interview shows that the producers at the Observer consider their readers as mostly liberals in the state. The producers also view their readers as active in their communities by participating in political meetings, and interested in public issues. Consequently, the Observer tries to include different voices of the society such as labor issues, social movements in other states, and national politics.

Another interesting result is that the producers have a different conception of the public and the audience. Most of the producers distinguish the general public from their readers who are seen as more active in political or social issues in Texas. Even though the readers of the Observer are seen as a subset of the general public, the readers of the Observer are seen as more active in regional, national politics, and community issues. This finding is consistent with Eliasoph's study of the alternative radio station. According to her, the producers at the alternative radio station view their audiences as active in community issues and political process.

As Jay Blumler (1996) says, the audience is an institutional construction and commercial media (most media in the US) treat their audiences as markets, but that alternative media are able to treat them as 'publics,' as 'social groups' and as 'involved audiences' in his terminology. According to Blumler's (1996, p. 100-101) notion of the audience, the audience is predominantly conceived:

> "as a *commodity*, with viewing as an essentially commercial transaction, in which all that matters is a "sale" and program content matters only to the extent that it encourages a sale
> as *individuals*, rather than as members of socially, culturally, or demographically formed collectivities
> as *spectators*, whose attention-giving or withholding is the key feature of their relationship to content (in contrast to any other forms of involvement of meanings they may derive from it)

Alternative media, however, treat their audience as publics who want to satisfy shared interests and need an enriched communication experience. As shown in my research, this alternative press treats their audiences as social groups and as involved audiences who have similar interests that communication can serve because of their shared "characteristics of place, social class, politics, culture, etc" (McQuail 1987: 222).

These interviews show that the producers at the Observer are all committed to social change. The interview also shows that the Observer has led the state's major dailies and national media in covering many stories first ignored by mainstream outlets. The producers had contacts with the readers by way of letters, emails, by phones or fundraising parties. Readers' comments on articles are run in the dialogue section of the magazine. The graphic designer changed the design of the Observer because of the readers' comments on the poor appearance of the Observer. The Observer is very aware of the readers' opinions. The Observer seems to incorporate the readers' feedback into the production of the magazine.

It is important to note that Observer staff members characterize their audience accurately in terms of demographics, tastes and ideology, and that this is different – importantly so – from what the literature on newspaper and magazine journalists' knowledge of their audience shows (Gans, 1979; Atkin, Burgoon & Burgoon, 1983; Dwerth-Pallmeyer, 1997). These researchers argued that communicators do not know their audiences. I think that this is the important contribution that this study makes to the media studies literature.

Additionally, these interviews show how Observer staffers' knowledge of the audience might affect how Observer staffers actually do their work. The Observer primarily puts forth a perspective that is more liberal than mainstream publications. The Observer's articles are not usually covered by mainstream media and staffers research their topics a lot. The articles are informative and of the kind which one does not come across in other mainstream publications. Additionally, the Observer covers Texas politics much more in-depth and with a different slant than major news publications in

Texas. The Observer is the best source of information about politics and the state not readily available in local media and it provides the readership with political detail information that is usually omitted or not covered by the mainstream press.

Why do the Observer staffers write the progressive, in-depth, and critical issues in the state or the nation? The Observer gives its readers a different perspective on political issues affecting Texas and offers the more progressive perspective because, in staffers' views, the readership is thought to enjoy reading the Observer's accurate, in-depth coverage of political and social issues in Texas, as well as to enjoy reading about things in Texas not covered in other media outlets. Observer staffers' accurate knowledge of such audience characteristics as readers' self-identified ideology, demographics, and readers' political activism might have led to a liberal perspective in the contents of the Observer.

I speculate on why Observer staffers accurately know their audiences. As shown in my interviews with Observer staff members, Observer staffers have direct interactions with their audiences through fundraising parties, other social functions, and correspondences. Such Observer staffers' interactions with their audiences might have provided Observer producers with knowledge of their audiences. As shown in my interviews with Observer staffers, producers think that the readership considers the Observer as a great source of alternative news and of political stories not covered by other media organizations in Texas. Observer staffers expressed that the readership is mostly liberal, middle-aged, highly educated, and politically active. Observer staffers' such knowledge of the audience might have affected how staffers actually perform their work.

Since this is a case study of a small alternative magazine, the study results cannot be applied to other different kinds of alternative publications. Therefore, future studies should conduct a multiple-case study to get a more generalized research results. Although many studies about alternative media emphasize the relationship between the alternative media and social movements, few studies investigate how the alternative media and social movements interact at the beginning of social movements. Future studies should investigate how this magazine interacts with social movements. Such studies can show that the alternative media and community activities are linked in stimulating local community movements. In other words, future studies should examine how the special audience media aimed at "focal publics" can activate local social movements. Such studies can elucidate how social movements at the beginning stage interact with the alternative media. Future studies should also examine the local influence of the magazine on social movements, as well as its relations with other alternative media in engaging the audience in important social and political issues in the state even in the nation.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank the Texas Observer for allowing me to interview the whole staff members, including the former editors.

1. The self-management structure is one where neither political party, nor labor union, nor church, nor state, nor publisher is in charge, but where the press or radio station runs itself (Downing 2001, 9).

2. Observer editor, Nate Blakeslee's article covered a drug raid in the tiny town of Tulia in the Texas Panhandle, in which nearly 12 percent of the African-American population was arrested on mere the word of an undercover agent.

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War with Iraq: How *The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London* covered the story after the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

On Sept. 11, 2002, one year after terrorists slammed two hijacked jetliners into the World Trade Center towers in New York City, another jetliner into the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and a third into a field in Pennsylvania, the nation paid homage to the victims. This anniversary became not only an opportunity to remember the events of Sept. 11, 2001, but also a turning point in the war on terrorism. The turning point was most evident in the Bush administration's increasing efforts to convince U.S allies, as well as the American people, that the time was right for a regime change in Iraq.

The terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001 recast U.S. foreign policy and raised the awareness of the American people concerning the prevalence of terrorism and their own susceptibility to it. Since the attacks, most Americans have developed a keen awareness of the potential of becoming victims of terrorism. The events of Sept. 11 put the world on high alert, and in response, the United States adopted a proactive role in what has become known as the "war on terrorism." Part of that war was an aggressive stance against Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and a strong push to change the regime. Although the idea of removing Saddam Hussein had been part of the political discourse ever since the first Gulf War, the momentum for conducting a preemptive war against Iraq reached a fever pitch following the first anniversary celebration of the Sept. 11 attacks. A few days after the anniversary, President Bush told the U.N. that the United States would conduct the war with Iraq by itself if necessary, and the issue exploded in the media.

War with Iraq: How *The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London* covered the story after the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

This present study examines the news pertaining to the war with Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London* between Sept. 11, 2002, (the date of the anniversary) and Sept. 30, 2002. This study provides an opportunity to examine how two different newspapers in two different countries articulated the potential war with Iraq, and what they selected to include or exclude in their coverage. The war with Iraq is an international news story that has received reaction on a worldwide scale. Examining the specific framing techniques of newspapers in countries whose leaders were in agreement on a regime change in Iraq but whose citizens were yet to be convinced, provides insight into how international news plays out on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The media have significant power over how the news is presented and how story topics and the sources are selected. During this selective news process, the media demonstrate much of their power to frame news coverage. This study looks at framing in a cross-national context and examines how two influential newspapers in the United States and Great Britain used various selections to frame the potential war with Iraq, and how those frames affected the presentation of the news. Therein lies the importance of this study.

Theoretical framework

The purpose of this study is to examine some of the selective mechanisms used in the news coverage of the potential war with Iraq and how those selections framed the coverage. The framing mechanisms include focus/topic of the stories, the use of sources, the placement of the stories, the story type and the tone of the story.

As Robert Entman (1993) suggests, framing is a way of giving interpretation to isolated items of fact. While looking primarily at content, the concept assumes that reporters, although they try to keep to the rules of objectivity, will likely succumb to the tendency to frame their stories in a way that emphasizes certain elements while overlooking others.

McQuail (2000, 343) suggests it is almost unavoidable for journalists to frame their stories and to depart from pure objectivity. Journalists work with news frames to "simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events" (Norris 1995, 357). In their study of framing in the coverage of the United Nations Conference of Women, Akhavan Majid and Ramaprasad (1998, 132) called framing a "fascinating process of cognitive simplification." Shoemaker and Reese (1996, 21) suggest, "News is a socially created product not a reflection of an objective reality." As such, news is a product of other influences like political, economic and ideological factors.

The concept of framing can be traced back to Goffman (1974, 10) who defined frames as "the principles of organization, which govern (social) events." Based on his definition, all forms of human experience, as well as their documentation by the news media are subject to framing. Tuchman (1978) was the first to apply the framing process to news work. The most widely used definition of framing is one by Entman (1993) who suggests that framing has four purposes—to define problems, to diagnose cause, to make moral judgments and to suggest remedies.

Entman (1993) says that to frame the news is to select a perceived reality, thus making it more salient in the communicative text. Using the framing concept, the news can be broken into four dimensions: the topic of the news, the presentation, the details of what is included in the frame and the tone of the story.

According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989) every policy issue has a culture where the discourse evolves and changes over time. Gitlin (1980, 7) observed that "media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and routinely organized discourse." Framing is a form of structural bias. It results from the selection process that takes place in the news. Although frames are not necessarily for or against some policy, nonetheless, with large political or strategic issues like the potential invasion of Iraq, there are often active efforts to frame events both in and out of the newsroom.

Entman (1993, 51) suggests that framing is a "scattered conceptualization." Wicks (1992) identified subtle differences in cognitive concepts; Hamill and Lodge (1986) see only terminological differences; Iyengar and Kinder (1987) have operationalized framing in combination with other concepts like agenda setting and priming; and finally McCombs (1997) suggests that not only are agenda setting and framing related, framing is in fact, an extension of agenda setting. Researchers have identified numerous kinds of framing concepts. For example: the horse-race frame of campaign elections (Hallin 1990); and the victim-perpetrator frame in reporting on acts of terrorism (Cohen and Wolfsfeld 1993). People in social movements such as feminists (Creedon 1993) and anti-nuclear activists (Entman 1993) claim they have been framed in ways that keep social movements under control.

Research studies on framing

The Persian Gulf crisis has provided numerous agenda-setting studies. A study by Iynegar and Simon (1993) examined three types of media effect: agenda setting, priming and framing. The framing research was a content analysis that showed that network news coverage was preoccupied with military affairs and highly event oriented. Survey data showed that respondents reporting higher rates of exposure to television news expressed greater support for a military as opposed to a diplomatic response to the crisis. The examination of framing was divided into two parts: First, an assessment of the episodic nature of news coverage—a common technique that produces a series of distinct, loosely connected stories or scenes; second, an examination of the effects of exposure to television news during the crisis on respondents' policy preferences. Iyengar and Simon hypothesized respondents reporting higher rates of exposure to television news would express greater support for a military response. The results showed that television was heavily episodic or event oriented and indicated that the news coverage of the conflict significantly affected Americans' political concerns and the criteria with which they evaluated George Bush. The study also showed that more than 50 percent of all reports examined came directly from official spokespersons. The war tended to be framed around the success of American technology and the malevolence of the Iraqis instead of the devastation of a Third World nation and the scale of civilian casualties. The use of official sources tended to ensure that the president's and the public's understanding of the crisis would be congruent.

For many decades the Cold War frame provided reporters with a clear and simple way to select and structure their stories about international affairs (Norris 1995). The central aim of Norris' study of the Cold War frame was to understand how dominant news frames evolve, change and adapt. The study focused on American network news coverage of international affairs after the Cold War ended. This study explored how far and how fast routine network coverage changed in patterns of international stories. The analysis suggests that the end of the Cold War had significant consequences for how American networks framed world news. Although the end of the Cold War was treated as major news, by 1995 there were fewer international news stories, and they were shorter. The decline in the coverage of Russia was seen as a primary example of the shift in priorities after the Cold War.

In an attempt to understand and analyze news framing of a major issue for disabled people, Haller and Ralph (2001) studied the news framing of physician-assisted suicide in the United States and Great Britain. They suggested that the news frame within the coverage of physician-assisted suicide presents narratives that ignore or devalue disability issues. For their study they analyzed two elite newspapers—*The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London*. Haller and Ralph observed a number of major frames in their study, many of which embody long-held cultural beliefs about disabilities. Haller and Ralph suggest that although the issue of physician-assisted suicide is not a simple one, it is clear from the news frames found in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* that many significant aspects of the debate as it relates to disabled people were ignored or misrepresented.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) examined five news frames in a content analysis of 2,601 newspaper stories and 1,522 television news stories surrounding the Amsterdam meetings of European heads of state in 1997. The five frames were attributions of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences and morality. Their results showed that overall the attribution of the responsibility frame was the most commonly used, followed by conflict, economic consequences, human interest and morality frames. Serious news outlets tended to use the responsibility of attributes more often than sensationalist outlets, which tended to use the human-interest frame most often.

On Sept. 1, 1983, a Soviet fighter plane shot down Korean AirLines Flight 007, killing 269 passengers and crew. On July 3, 1988, a U.S. Navy ship shot down an Iran Air Flight killing 290. In Entman's (1991) study on framing of U.S. coverage of international news, he examined the contrasting news frames employed by several important U.S. media outlets. Entman suggests that there were several political impacts as a result of the framing. In the KAL case, the House and Senate voted to denounce the KAL shootdown; in the Iran case, the coverage helped keep the public opinion in favor of the U.S. and perpetuate the possibility that the event might unravel support for American policy. Finally, Entman points out, the analysis suggests that the framing was composed of at least five traits of media texts: importance, judgments, identification, categorization and generalization.

In another study on international news coverage by the U.S. media, Haque (1983) examined the debate that charges the U.S. media with cultural imperialism and with ignoring Third World nations in coverage. His study examined the allegation of imbalance in global coverage by three elite dailies. Haque observed that although there were significant differences among the dailies in terms of volume, news, coverage and format, significant similarities were found in the general pattern of international news coverage. In addition, the three dailies depended heavily on their own correspondents.

Bailey (1976) conducted an investigation of the interpretive reporting of the Vietnam War by anchormen and examined whether there was mere chronicling of the battles and protests or whether there was interpretation of the causes and effects of the war. Bailey's content analysis was limited to network anchormen and their interpretative coverage of Vietnam. He found that the network anchormen read short stories of events with much interpretation. Bailey also found that the television networks tended to frame the war as a conflict with the Americans and the South Vietnamese against the Communist enemy or Viet Cong.

The mass communication literature provides many studies that indicate that mass media can deligitimize or marginalize protest groups that challenge the status quo. Research indicates that news coverage tends to focus on the protesters' appearance rather than their issues. In the process of framing social and political movements, the news media play a powerful role in determining the success or failure of political issues. Political scientist Murray Edelman (Entman, Rojecki, 1993) described the strong tendency for pressure from below to receive a symbolic response from government. In a study of the elite and media framing of the antinuclear movement in the United States by Entman and Rojecki, results indicated that when elites and a majority of the public support the president, we can expect journalism to be cautious in separating itself from the government spin. They suggest that framing judgments made and deployed in the text by *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine in coverage reveal patterns that inhibited the movement's success.

In another study of framing effects on social movements, McLeod and Detenber (1999) investigated framing effects of television news coverage of an anarchist protest. The study found that three treatment stories differed in their level of status quo support. Status quo support has significant effects on viewers, leading them to be more critical of and less likely to identify with, the protesters; less critical of the police; and less likely to support the protesters' expressive rights. They also show the importance of journalists' framing decisions and their choice of sources, words and pictures used to construct their stories. Many recent framing effects studies focus on women's issues. In one study by Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (1998), the Chinese press and U.S. press coverage of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women was examined. This study found evidence of an anticommunist and antifeminist frame in the U.S. coverage. The research also linked ideology and framing and found that under the influence of the dominant ideology, the U.S. coverage of the conference focused on an extended criticism of China as a communist nation. Thus, say the researchers, dominant ideology played a prominent role in the framing of international news. The dominant ideology, whether it's communism or capitalism, functions as a major source of framing.

Darling-Wolf (1997) examined the framing of the breast implant controversy focusing on the story that developed around the safety of silicone breast implants. She examined all *The New York Time* articles dealing with the issue between April 1991 and April 1993. Darling-Wolf notes that her analysis indicated that framing happened on different levels. First, the effects of socialization of reporters into practices of journalistic conventions were evident in the selection of sources, named and unnamed, and the types of stories. Second, the influence of the cultural context in which the *Times* operates also transpired in its coverage, both in the newspaper's failure to question the validity of the capitalist system and in its reliance on concepts prominent in American ideology to interpret the issue. The study also noted that the "culture of objectivity" was carefully maintained by use of various sources to balance the coverage and quotes were often used to denote the reporter's status as an outside observer. There were also limited types of stories, which were noted as a way to keep the debate focused on three parties and avoid coverage of other issues pertaining to the controversy. Darling-Wolf concludes that her study shows how framing can operate to shape the view of the world and that the process of news making is affected by professional and business practices, as well as by large political and social forces.

One of the media's most powerful effects is setting the agenda by choosing what to cover and what not to cover, thus organizing a picture of the world. In a study of how media play a crucial role in the success or failure of political issues and social movements, Ashley and Olson (1998) conducted a content analysis of the framing techniques in *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* magazine of the women's movement. The strongest evidence for framing techniques was the deligitimation of feminists. This included reporting aspects of the women's appearance, using quotation marks around such words as "liberation" and emphasizing dissension within the movement. Conversely, the anti-feminists were described as well organized and attractive. The movement's goals were rarely mentioned, while surface details were commonly presented. A study by Liebes and Kulka (1995) takes a different route in examining frame ambiguities and focuses on some of the actual participants, namely Israeli soldiers serving in the territories during the *infitada*. The study found that Israeli soldiers represented the *intifada* on the one hand as violent disturbances and on the other as a continuation of the Arab-Israeli war, only this time against civilians. Liebes referred to this as the law and order frame and the war frame. The study found a great deal of switching back and forth between the ideals and a rich sense of ambiguity.

This present examination of the coverage of the invasion of Iraq by newspapers in different countries provides a good opportunity to observe how two different newspapers in two different countries framed an issue within their respective political and social milieus. Given that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair were in agreement on the issue of Iraq, it could be expected that newspapers would be prone to frame the story with a more positive, supportive tone. On the other hand, if the concern by political parties in both countries and the opposition by many of the nations of the world were part of the background of the story, it could have added balance to the news frame.

This present study asks the following research questions:

> RQ 1: How does the use of sources in news coverage in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* coverage compare?
> RQ 2: How does the tone of the news stories compare?
> RQ 3: How does the tone in the editorials and commentaries compare?
> RQ 4: How does the use of named sources and unnamed sources compare?
> RQ 5: How does story type, placement and length compare?
> RQ 6: How does the tone of U.S. officials used in the *Times* and the *Guardian* compare with the tone of foreign officials used in the *Times* and the *Guardian*?
> RQ 7: How do tone, use of sources, story length and story placement work to frame the invasion of Iraq story in the *Times* and the *Guardian*?
> RQ 8: How does the focus/topic of the news articles frame the coverage in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian*?

War with Iraq: How *The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London* covered the story after the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

Methodology

This study is a content analysis of the potential war with Iraq as covered in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian of London*. The evaluation of press performance has become a major part of communication research, and the use of content analysis has become a primary tool for examining the press (Krippendorf 1980). The content analysis for this study follows in a tradition of an ever-growing number of content analyses focusing on exploring the framing of news stories.

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), content analysis is a good first step to media effects research because it examines the messages that are available to an audience as well as what messages might actually affect the audience. Bradley Greenberg's *Life On Television* (1980), for example, focuses solely on the content of entertainment television. Although a study of media content alone is not enough to understand the forces that produce the content or the extent of its effects, content research is a good starting point in understanding structural factors of stories (Shoemaker and Reese 1996).

The present study examines the news coverage and the editorial pages of all articles that focused on the potential war with or invasion of Iraq published between Sept. 11, 2002, and Sept. 30, 2002. The first date, Sept. 11, 2002, was chosen because it marks the anniversary of the terrorists' attacks on the United States as well as the escalation of the regime change issue in Iraq by the Bush administration. The closing date for the study was chosen because it covers the weeks after the anniversary celebration in which the issue became pervasive in the news. *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* were chosen for the study for several reasons: the respective leaders of both countries both have voiced support for the idea of a regime change and possible invasion of Iraq; the issue was debated heavily in both countries and subsequently dominated press coverage in both newspapers; the *Times* and the *Guardian* wield a good deal of influence on other newspapers in their respective nations; and finally, the two publications provide an opportunity for comparison of press coverage in two countries, as well as the opportunity to explore the similarities and differences in newsgathering routines, news framing and selection of the news and sources on an international story with global significance.

The news stories and editorial/commentaries for this study were obtained using Lexis/Nexis. Editorials were identified as unsigned editorials; commentaries as opinion pieces with a byline. The key words used in the search for stories were "Saddam Hussein" and "Iraq war." Those words produced 73 stories from *The New York Times* and 81 stories from the *Guardian*.

The content analysis tracks five categories: 1). Type of story: identified either as news, editorial or commentary. 2). Sources: identified as government official, military official, academic official or public, which was considered anyone of the general public who did not fit into the other categories including stories with reference to polls. 3). Placement of the stories: listed as either front page or inside pages. Editorials and commentaries are assumed to be on the editorial pages so no such distinction was made. 4). Length of story: identified as long (1000 words or more), medium, (600-999 words) and small (less than 600 words). 5). Tone: identified as either positive tone concerning the war with Iraq, negative, neutral or mixed tone.

The analysis includes an examination of the frequency of the types of stories, sources used, story placement, story length and story tone. In addition, the study examined the focus of the articles. The study looked at eight topics in each newspaper: Bush/Congress focus, Blair/Parliament focus, military focus, man-in-the-street interviews, inside Iraq focus, economics focus, weapons inspections focus and miscellaneous. The topics were chosen if they appeared five or more times in the articles. The analysis also includes comparisons across the two newspapers both in terms of straight news and editorials/commentaries using the five categories. In addition, this study looks at one sub issue and examines how many times the term "weapons of mass destruction" appeared in the stories.

Using paragraphs as units of text in the 154 stories chosen for examination, this study examined 1,988 units. Each unit was identified as positive, negative, mixed or neutral in tone.

- Positive: A graph was considered positive if the source of the story made a direct supportive statement for war, proposed pre-emptive attack, proposed use of war to over throw Saddam Hussein, proposed use of war to force Iraq to remove weapons of mass destruction, or pledged support for the Bush resolution to the U.N. on Iraq. In the case of the military, sources making direct reference to preparing for war were considered positive.

- Negative—A graph was considered negative when there was a direct reference from a source against war with Iraq, against the proposal for overthrowing Hussein, against the proposal for use of force to change regime or forces inspections, or a direct opposition to Bush's proposal to the United Nations.
- Mixed—A graph was considered mixed when reference from sources favored a multilateral agreement backed up by possible attack, sources favored negotiations prior to any consideration of an attack, sources favored inspections in Iraq over attack, or sources indicated they were undecided on issue.
- Neutral—Neutral is not undecided. A graph was considered neutral when no reference from source to war with Iraq or overthrowing Hussein was expressed and only generic information was included. There are ten tables showing the results of the content analysis.

Results

This present study examines the news coverage and editorial/commentary content of the invasion of Iraq in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* following the second anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists' attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. A total of 2,404 units (paragraphs) were examined for use of sources, (named and not named) and tone—positive, negative, neutral or mixed. The study found significant statistical difference in the categories of tone, sources quoted, use of named sources and sources not named, and length of the articles. There was also a significant difference found in tone used by U.S. officials and foreign officials as quoted in both newspapers. There were some similarities and differences in the use of topics in both newspapers.

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There were no significant differences found in types of story used, story placement or editorial tone.

RQ 1: How does the use of sources in news coverage compare?

Official U.S. sources dominated *The New York Times'* coverage, accounting for 70 percent of the total sources used and a significant statistical difference (see table 1). U.S. official sources accounted for 15 percent of the total sources in the *Guardian*. Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and President Bush were the most heavily used U.S. sources. Both Democrat and Republican officials were also frequently used. The *Times* used fewer foreign sources than the *Guardian*. The *Guardian* relied more heavily on foreign official sources (47 percent). European, Middle East and British officials were counted as foreign in the *Guardian*. Some of the foreign officials used as sources in the *Guardian* were Iraqi officials. The *Times* did not use any Iraqi officials in their coverage, except for one instance in which they published a story of a letter by Saddam Hussein to the U.N. Security Council.

Military officials appeared only 5 times in the *Guardian* coverage. The *Times* used military officials in its coverage 52 times. One of the biggest differences in sources was the use of "no source" or the "writer/reporter" as source. Although in editorials and signed commentaries the use of the writer as source would be expected, the reporters at the *Guardian* commonly provided information and statements of fact without referring to a specific source or attribution. (30 percent. See table 2). Unless it was an editorial or a commentary, *The New York Times'* reporters consistently attributed statements of facts and information in their coverage.

RQ 2: How does the tone of the news stories compare?

There was a significant difference between the tone of the straight news in the *Times* and the *Guardian*. Overall, the *Times* used a positive tone more often than the *Guardian* (see table 6). In the *Times,* a positive tone accounted for 28 percent of the article units, while in the *Guardian* it accounted for 14 percent. By contrast, a negative tone accounted for 21 percent of the *Guardian's* article units and 15 percent of the *Times.* the *Guardian* used articles with a neutral tone more often (40 percent vs. 34 percent), but both papers used similar numbers of article units with a mixed tone. Although the predominant tone in the straight news was a neutral tone, the percentage of positive and negative tone was still significantly different.

RQ 3: How does the tone in the editorials and commentaries compare?

The use of tone in commentaries also showed a significant statistical difference (see table 8). A positive tone concerning the invasion of Iraq in *The New York Times* (23 percent) appeared more often than a positive tone in the *Guardian* (11 percent). Conversely, a negative tone on the invasion appeared more frequently in the *Guardian* (30 percent) than the *Times* (17 percent). The most common commentary tone in both newspapers was a neutral tone and the next most common tone was mixed. Although there were significant statistical differences in the tone of commentaries, there was no significant difference in the tone of editorials (see table 7).

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RQ 4: How did the use of named sources and not named sources compare?

There was also a significant difference in the use of named sources versus sources not named (see table 2). *The New York Times* predominantly used named U.S. official sources (89 percent). Although the *Guardian* used more named than not named sources, as a percentage of the total sources (37 percent), they used fewer named sources than the *Times*. As was mentioned above, in the straight news articles the *Guardian* reporters tended to provide information without attribution more often than the *Times*.

RQ 5: How does story length and story placement compare?

The New York Times used more long stories than the *Guardian* (see table 3.) The *Guardian* relied more on medium and short articles in its coverage. There was no difference in the placement of stories (See table 4). Both newspapers tended to place the stories off the front page. Front-page stories accounted for 25 percent of *The New York Times* articles and 22 percent of the *Guardian* stories. There was also a significant statistical difference in the types of article used (table 5). Both newspapers used mostly straight news stories (*Times* 64 percent; *Guardian* 69 percent).

RQ 6: How does the tone of U.S. officials used in articles in The New York Times *and the* Guardian *differ from the tone of foreign officials used in both newspapers?*

The U.S. officials, in both *Times* and the *Guardian* were much more likely to express a positive tone concerning the invasion of Iraq (table 9). The foreign officials, on the other hand, tended to be more negative in their response. Again, although the neutral and mixed tones were somewhat more frequent, the percentage of positive and negative tone was still high.

Discussion

This examination of the news coverage in *The New York Times* and the *Guardian* found considerable differences in how these newspapers covered the possible invasion of Iraq. In most cases, each paper tended to frame its coverage by the use of sources and the tone those sources expressed concerning the invasion of Iraq. For example, U.S. officials expressed more positive tones about the invasion than foreign officials. *The New York Times* relied heavily on information from U.S. official sources – both elected, non-elected and military – and thus framed its coverage from an official point of view. Using primarily sources from within the ranks of the government not only narrowed the focus of the stories but resulted in a greater proportion of positive tone in the story presentation. It is sometimes not just who is quoted, but who is not quoted that frames news coverage. This study found that foreign officials were more likely to express a negative tone to the invasion of Iraq, and as such, the use of fewer foreign officials by the *Times* also helped frame the stories with a more positive tone than in the *Guardian*. Nonetheless, the foreign sources used by the *Times* and the *Guardian* did tend to be more negative in their tone to the invasion of Iraq. One reason for this could be the fact that the foreign sources represented countries much closer geographically to Iraq and therefore much more susceptible to retaliation and terrorist attacks. This could explain why European and

Middle East sources presented a more negative tone in the articles. It would be expected too that the *Guardian* would use more foreign sources simply because it is a European newspaper, and that the use of sources could create a frame quite different than the *Times*—a frame more negative in tone. This was found to be true.

Military sources tended to be more positive in their statements. The *Times* use of military sources was 10 times greater than the *Guardian's* (table 1), which supports the notion that the *Times'* use of sources framed the story much more positively when it came to the invasion of Iraq than the *Guardian*. The tone in the commentaries also contributed to a different frame by each newspaper. There was a significant difference between the tone of the *Times'* signed commentaries and the *Guardian's*. The *Guardian's* commentaries were more likely to express a negative or a neutral tone than the *Times*. This too contributed to the overall differences in framing—the *Times* more positive in nature, the *Guardian* more negative. It is interesting that there was no significant difference in the tones of the unsigned editorials the papers published. The fact that unsigned editorials represent the voice of the newspaper could mean it was simply safer in terms of government relations, for the newspapers to let other sources set the tone.

The use of official sources worked to frame the coverage in similar ways in both the *Times* and the *Guardian*. For instance, both newspapers relied heavily on official sources, the *Times* using more U.S. sources and the *Guardian* using more European/Middle East sources. In doing so, the tone of those officials framed the coverage either more positively or negatively. Since U.S. officials showed a significant bend toward positive responses to the potential invasion of Iraq, the coverage in the *Times* tended to be more positive in nature. Since European and Middle East sources were prone to give more negative responses, the *Guardian* frame was skewed toward a more negative tone in terms of war with Iraq.

There were both similarities and differences in the topics examined in the articles in the *Times* and the *Guardian* (table 10). Both newspapers covered many of the same events including Bush's speech to the U.N., Blair's speech to the Parliament, Iraq's decision to allow inspectors, and Gore's opposition to the Bush resolution. Both the *Times* and the *Guardian* covered the discourse on the Iraq issue as it wound its way through their respective government bodies and both papers followed the discourse in other countries, though the *Guardian* had many more articles on Europe's response to the invasion of Iraq.

The *Guardian* also had more articles from inside Iraq including several "man on the street" type interviews with various Iraqi officials and an interview with an Iraqi doctor. The *Times* had a story on a Virginia congressman's visit to Iraq and a story from Baghdad that depicted the mood in Iraq to be very anti-American. The *Times* covered the political opposition in the states to the war by doing two stories on Senator Kennedy and reporting opposition statements by other Democratic politicians in the course of the debate. But because the debate in the U.S. Congress was less volatile than in Parliament, those opposition articles in the *Times* had a milder tone. This also could explain the high percentage of mixed tone from U.S. nonmilitary officials. The *Guardian* also published opposition stories from the Parliament but the tone was much more volatile. This could be explained by the fact that the British labor party was much more vocal in its criticism than the Democrats in the states. Even though the Blair/Parliament focus (table 10) was used by both newspapers, it could be argued that the tendency of the British Parliament to be more vocal in its opposition to the invasion of Iraq could have balanced Blair's more positive tone and helped create a negative tone in *Guardian* coverage. There were three articles in the *Times* that reported military operations and deployments pertaining to the invasion of Iraq. There were no such stories in the *Guardian*. Both newspapers did two "man on the street" articles to get a sense of what the average citizens were thinking. The pieces in the *Times* were balanced evenly with pro and con responses. The *Guardian* found more opposition with its "man on the street" interviews. In all, the topics like the major speeches of Bush and Blair and major events such as the Iraqi decision to allow inspectors into Iraq all worked to create similar frames in both the *Times* and the *Guardian*. Both newspapers relied heavily on the Bush/Congress focus and Blair/Parliament focus. On the other hand, the presence of greater political opposition in Parliament as well as with the general public in Great Britain and Europe may have helped skew the tone toward the negative more in the *Guardian* than in the *Times*. The *Guardian's* use of more European and Iraqi sources also provided more varied topics to the coverage. The *Times'* topics were more often the result of major events. One common topic in the *Guardian* was the potential negative economic ramifications of a war that appeared in six articles. The *Times* published just one commentary from an economic perspective. In addition to the examinations of tone, sources, and focus/topic in terms of the framing of the coverage, this study also found that one sub-category, the use of the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" also contributed to the overall framing of the stories in both papers. In 73 stories, the phrase appeared in the *Times* 67 times, while in the *Guardian* it appeared 88 times in 81 stories. This supports the idea that the articles were often framed around the idea of the connection of the war with Iraq and "weapons of mass destruction. In addition to relying heavily upon elected and appointed officials for their stories, both newspapers also used some academic and members of the general public as sources. But these were used far less than the official sources.

It is interesting that *The New York Times* quoted former weapons inspector Scott Ritter only twice, while the *Guardian* featured Ritter in two stories in which he was the central source. Ritter was an outspoken critic of the war. Another interesting finding was the *Guardian's* use of either no source or the reporter as source in their articles. It would seem that the *Guardian* is much more likely to let its reporters provide information without directly attributing the source. The *Times,* on the other hand, abides strictly to the traditional journalistic ethic of attribution. It should be noted again that the geographical, political and social environment of Great Britain as well as Europe's proximity to Iraq could have influenced the *Guardian's* use of sources. The existence of greater opposition to the war and their expanded use of topics might also be explained by geographical and social conditions of Great Britain.

Overall, this study found some significant differences in the coverage of the potential invasion of Iraq, as well as support for how those differences in coverage helped frame a more U.S.official/military-positive tone in *The New York Times*, and a more foreign official-negative tone in *The Guardian of London*. Given the importance of framing research and its role in influencing public perceptions, future research should examine other international issue frames in cross-national contexts. There is a rich source of international issues that are creating cross-national news coverage not only in European countries, but Asia and South America as well. Examination and comparison of news coverage in media organizations from different countries should not only enrich the discourse but also contribute fresh insights into the framing process.

TABLE 1: SOURCES USED IN NEWS, EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
U.S. Officials	655 (70%)	148 (15%)
Foreign Officials	120 (13%)	460 (47%)
Military Officials	52 (6%)	5 (> 1%)
Academic Officials	22 (2%)	22 (2%)
General public	28 (3%)	44 (4%)
No source/reporter	66 (6%)	293 (30%)

$x^2 = 592.69$ df = 5 P < .01**

TABLE 2: TOTAL SOURCES NAMED AND NOT NAMED

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Named sources	768 (89%)	386 (63%)
Sources not named	104 (11%)	229 (37%)
Total sources	872	615

$x^2 = 133.00$ df = 1 P< .01**

TABLE 3: ARTICLE LENGTH

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Long articles	32 (44%)	18 (22%)
Medium articles	29 (40%)	39 (48%)
Short articles	12 (16%)	24 (30%)
Total articles	73	81

$x^2 = 9.00$ df = 2 P< .05

TABLE 4: ARTICLE PLACEMENT

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Front page	18 (25%)	18 (22%)
Inside pages	55 (75%)	63 (78%)

$x^2 = 0.11$ df = 1 $P > .05$

TABLE 5: TYPE OF ARTICLE

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
News	49 (64%)	56 (69%)
Editorial	9 (12%)	4 (5%
Commentary	15 (20%)	21 (25%)

$x^2 = 5.03$ df = 3 $P > .05$

TABLE 6: TONE OF THE NEWS ARTICLES PER UNIT

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Positive tone	278 (28%)	128 (14%)
Negative tone	150 (15%)	191 (21%)
Neutral tone	344 (34%)	356 (40%)
Mixed tone	225 (22%)	216 (24%)
Total units	997	891

$x^2 = 55.00$ df = 3 $P < .01$**

TABLE 7: TONE OF EDITORIALS PER UNIT

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Positive tone	5 (10%)	2 (8%)
Negative tone	3 (.5%)	6 (25%)
Neutral tone	18 (35%)	5 (20%)
Mixed tone	25 (49%)	11 (45%)
Total units	51	24

$x^2 = 5.12$ df = 3 $P > .01$

TABLE 8: TONE OF COMMENTARIES PER UNIT

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Positive tone	44 (23%)	29 (11%)
Negative tone	33 (17%)	75 (30%)
Neutral tone	72 (37%)	110 (44%)
Mixed tone	43 (22%)	31 (31%)
Total	196	245

$x^2 = 23.25$ df = 3 $P < .01$**

TABLE 9: TONE BY SOURCE

—*TIMES* AND *GUARDIAN* (combined)

	U.S. Official	**Foreign**
Positive tone	287 (36%)	68 (11%)
Negative tone	85 (10%)	131 (22%)
Neutral tone	235 (30%)	196 (33%)
Mixed tone	175(22%)	184 (31%)
Total	779	579

$x^2 = 123.98$ df =3 P < .01**

TABLE 10: TOPIC USE IN THE *TIMES* AND THE *GUARDIAN*

	TIMES	*GUARDIAN*
Bush/Congress	32	12
Blair/Parliament	5	34
Inspections	3	9
Economics	1	6
Inside Iraq	1	7
Man on street	3	2
Military	3	1
Misc.	**24**	**17**

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A Multistage Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

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A Multistage Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

Abstract

To accurately represent local media coverage of a news event or issue, content analysts must devise a systematic method for sampling local news coverage in markets nationwide. This paper presents one approach to constructing a valid national sample of local news coverage. Using designated market areas (DMAs®), which represent the dominant geographic area of influence for television stations, researchers can create a nationally representative sample of local media, including both television and newspaper coverage.

A Multistage Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

Many content analyses of news are concerned with high visibility coverage of major events (e.g., Dyer, Miller, & Boone, 1991; Min, 2002; Nimmo & Combs, 1985; Wilkins, 1987) or issues (e.g., Baker, 1986; Marton & Stephens, 2001; Wilkins & Patterson, 1991). In these studies, researchers often use purposive sampling strategies in which they track the content of the AP newswire, specific bellwether publications such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post,* or network TV news.

The idea behind such purposive sampling is to capture the content of nationally visible media outlets, which, according to the intermedia agenda setting function (Danielian & Reese, 1989; Reese & Danielian, 1989; Breen, 1997), set the agenda for other media outlets when the issues being studied are of national concern. This approach is particularly reasonable for high-profile issues that affect U.S. population centers more than less populated areas of the country.

Another purposive sampling approach researchers often employ is to sample in a select number of media markets, not just prestige markets (e.g., Artwick & Gordon, 1998; Harry, 2001; Husselbee & Elliott, 2002; Ploughman, 1995). This approach allows researchers to address interesting, market-specific questions. However, this strategy does not allow researchers to generalize their findings to media coverage across the country. Researchers can only characterize the coverage in the markets they have studied.

Both of these types of purposive samples are popular. According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998), 68.1% of content analysis articles in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* from 1971 to 1995 used purposive samples.

Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

The sampling challenge for researchers arises when they wish to characterize local media coverage of an issue or topic across the country, such as crime, accidents, or alcohol-related risks. In these cases, generalizing from major newspapers (e.g., *New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times*) and network evening newscasts to coverage at the local level is flawed. Given the relative lack of other major local stories, the lack of staff resources to cover more complex stories, and the traditional priorities particularly of local TV news, local media, especially those in small markets, tend to focus on local crimes, accidents, and injuries (e.g., McManus, 1994). Consequently, researchers may be severely underestimating the extent of coverage of some topics, particularly crime, accident, and injury stories, if they generalize from the country's major media outlets. At issue in this paper is how to construct a nationally representative sample of local news coverage that is both valid and practical.

This paper discusses local news coverage from both print and television media outlets for two reasons. First, such an approach provides the most complete picture of local news coverage. Second, the approach allows researchers to analyze the differences between newspaper and TV coverage of local issues and events. For example, researchers can analyze differences in the extent, prominence, and framing of the coverage.

Stage I: Geographic Stratification of the Country

Unfortunately, content analysis sampling is not especially sophisticated with respect to obtaining a nationally representative sample of local news coverage (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998). Simple random sampling techniques are inadequate in this case. In a simple random sample, a similar weight in the analysis would be given to a newspaper with a circulation of 1,000 and a newspaper with a circulation of 100,000. Yet, clearly, the smaller newspaper's influence circle is much smaller than that of the larger newspaper.

In this situation, researchers need a way to estimate the frequency/prominence of news coverage of an issue or topic as it is actually experienced by the U.S. population. They need to sample news outlets so that their probability of inclusion in the sample is approximately proportional to their circulation or reach. In a sense, researchers are trying to estimate what advertisers might call total gross impressions, or the number of individuals potentially exposed to news coverage of each issue or topic; news outlets with different reaches or circulations represent different shares of these impressions.

In principle, it is possible to use weighting at the analysis stage to adjust the impact of individual newspaper stories or broadcast observations from outlets with different circulations or reach. However, the *New York Post,* with a circulation of 487,219, for example, might have to be weighted as much as 50 times more heavily than a small newspaper from the same market area, such as the *Ocean County Observer* out of Toms River, New Jersey, with a circulation of 9,757. Such weights would dramatically increase the impact of the typical daily fluctuations in news coverage in the larger newspapers and TV stations, raising random error in the sample to unacceptable levels.

Another strategy has been employed by Kunkel and colleagues in their research on broadcasters' compliance with the Children's Television Act of 1990 (Kunkel & Canepa, 1994; Kunkel & Goette, 1997). They sampled local television stations by using a stratified random sampling technique in which they divided media markets into four strata, based on rankings in the *Broadcasting Yearbook* and later the *Broadcasting/Cable Yearbook.* The *Broadcasting Yearbook* series uses designated market areas (DMAs®) to rank the nation's television stations.

Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

A DMA® represents the dominant geographic area of influence for television stations in metropolitan and urban areas.

DMAs® are the most widely used approach to defining media markets (Standard Rate and Data Service, 2000). There are 210 DMAs®, covering all counties in the United States. They can be used to segment the geographic reach of newspapers as well as electronic media. See Table 1 for a sample DMA®.

Table 1. Daily Newspapers and TV Outlets in the Phoenix DMA®

Newspaper (Location)	Days of Week	Circulation
The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)	Monday – Friday	451,608
	Saturday	451,608
	Sunday	554,682
Tribune (Mesa)	Monday – Friday	87,945
	Saturday	87,945
	Sunday	76,020
Sun City Daily News-Sun (Sun City)	Monday – Friday	21,506
	Saturday	21,506
The Daily Courier (Prescott)	Monday – Friday	18,207
	Sunday	19,830
Arizona Daily Sun (Flagstaff)	Monday – Friday	11,598
	Saturday	11,598
	Sunday	13,623
Today's News-Herald (Lake Havasu City)	Tuesday – Friday	10,027
	Sunday	12,059
Casa Grande Dispatch (Casa Grande)	Monday – Friday	8,733
	Saturday	8,733
Kingman Daily Miner (Kingman)	Monday – Friday	7,787
	Sunday	8,245
Mohave Valley Daily News (Bullhead City)	Monday – Friday	7,215
	Sunday	8,550

Table 1. Daily Newspapers and TV Outlets in the Phoenix DMA® (concl.)

TV Station (Location)	Network Affiliation
K23BJ-LP, Lake Havasu City	Independent
K36AX-LP, Kingman	Independent
KASW-TV, Phoenix	WB
KBPX-TV, Flagstaff	None Listed
KNXV-TV, Phoenix	ABC
KPAZ-TV, Phoenix	Independent
KPHO-TV, Phoenix	CBS
KPNX-TV, Phoenix	NBC
KPPX-TV, Phoenix	None Listed
KSAZ-TV, Phoenix	FOX
KTVK-TV, Phoenix	Independent
KTVW-TV, Phoenix	Univision
KUSK-TV, Prescott	Independent
KUTP-TV, Phoenix	UPN
KAET-TV, Tempe	None Listed

In Kunkel and colleagues' four-strata approach, the top 25 DMA® markets nationally comprised the first stratum. Markets 26 to 50 were in the second stratum, and markets 51 to 100 made up the third stratum. The fourth stratum contained the remaining 110 markets (see Table 2). Then Kunkel and colleagues randomly chose 12 stations from each stratum. The researchers chose this approach because they wanted to ensure that the larger markets were more heavily represented in their samples, given that these markets have wider audience reach than smaller markets. In addition, the larger markets would have correspondingly larger resources bases to help them develop or acquire children's programming.

Table 2. DMAs® Divided into Four Strata

Strata	No. of DMAs®	Percent of U.S. Population	Range of DMAs® within Strata
1	25	49	New York City to San Diego
2	25	18	Indianapolis to Providence-New Bedford
3	50	19	Wilkes-Barre-Scranton to Savannah
4	110	14	Lincoln-Hastings-Kearney to Glendive

Approach to Obtaining a Nationally Representative Sample of Local News Coverage

The approach used by Kunkel and colleagues ensured that the researchers obtained a diverse set of local TV stations, which was appropriate for their research questions. However, there is a problem with using only four DMA® strata as a basis for selecting media outlets: insufficient homogeneity within strata. For example, the New York City metro DMA®, which is the largest in the country comprising 6.82 percent of the U.S. population, is essentially treated the same in the analysis as the San Diego metro DMA®, the 25th largest DMA® comprising 0.973 percent of the U.S. population.

One approach to increase the homogeneity within strata is to divide the 210 markets into more strata. We propose dividing the ranked DMA® list into six strata, with each stratum consisting of approximately 1/6th of all U.S. households. In this scenario, the number of DMAs® per stratum varies much more dramatically than it does in Kunkel and colleagues' work (see Table 3). However, the media markets within each stratum are more similar, so that randomly choosing from the markets within a stratum should provide a more accurate representation of all markets in the stratum. (See the appendix for a list of DMAs® in each stratum). In this sampling strategy, the media outlets from the larger DMAs® would be more likely to be selected, because each newspaper issue or TV news broadcast from these outlets represents a correspondingly large share of the local media experienced by the U.S. population.

Table 3. DMAs® Divided into Six Strata

Strata	No. of DMAs®	Percent of U.S. Population	Range of DMAs® within Strata
1	3	15	New York City to Chicago
2	9	18	Philadelphia to Seattle-Tacoma
3	14	17	Tampa-St. Petersburg to Indianapolis
4	24	17	Hartford/New Haven to Providence-New Bedford
5	41	16	Wilkes-Barre-Scranton to Burlington-Plattsburg
6	119	17	Tri-Cities to Glendive

Once the country has been stratified in this manner, researchers can randomly choose X number of markets from each stratum to best represent news coverage of a given topic across the country.

Another alternative to stratification would be to sample a selected number of DMAs® per day with replacement from the pool of 210 DMAs®, adjusting each DMA®'s probability of selection by the number of households served. The data could later be collapsed into sized-based strata in the analysis. However, this approach is an inefficient and complex way to accomplish the same result that stratification does. It makes more sense for researchers to use weighted sampling when they do not have sufficient information about their sampling frame to stratify. In addition, if researchers wish to make comparisons across media markets of different sizes, it is much cleaner to stratify the sample prior to sampling. This approach ensures that the various strata are of equivalent size in the final sample, permitting parametric statistical comparisons among the strata.

Stage II: Stratification within Designated Market Areas

Once Stage I stratification is completed, researchers will need a strategy for choosing news media outlets from within the selected DMAs®.

Daily Newspaper Selection

When the researchers' goal is to characterize local news coverage across the country, the selection strategy within the DMAs® should allow researchers to characterize news coverage at different circulation levels. Circulation numbers reflect the different resource bases that newspapers have at their disposal; these resource bases affect what becomes news (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Within most DMAs®, newspaper circulation sizes vary widely. For example, the Boston DMA® has 29 daily newspapers, with weekday circulations ranging from 3,726 to 467,217. As discussed in Stage I, researchers could employ a weighting system in the analysis phase to adjust for differences in circulation sizes; however, such an approach would increase random error to unacceptable levels. Instead, we propose a simpler way to represent the differing circulation levels within a DMA®. In our approach, the largest circulation newspaper would always be chosen from the DMA® because this newspaper has the largest reach and, most likely, the largest resource base[1]. Next, the rest of the newspapers within the DMA® would be rank ordered by circulation size, and a median split would be taken.[2] Then one newspaper would be randomly chosen from above the median split and one from below the median split. Using this approach, researchers would have three data points per DMA®, each of which represents a different circulation level. Such an approach would provide researchers with insights into how news media with relatively different resource bases cover a similar geographic area. Table 4 provides an example of this approach for the Providence-New Bedford DMA®.

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[1] Some DMAs® have more than one newspaper that can be considered large. One rule of thumb for determining whether there is more than one large newspaper in a DMA® is to divide the circulation for the largest newspaper in two. Then any newspaper's circulation that is larger than this number is also considered a large newspaper. If a DMA® has more than one large newspaper, researchers have several sampling options. First, they can simply randomly choose from among the large newspapers. Second, then can still take the newspaper with the highest circulation, arguing that it has the largest reach. Third, if the DMA® in question will be sampled from again later in the study, the researchers can choose to rotate among the large newspapers in the DMA®.

[2] If, once the largest newspaper(s) has been selected from a DMA®, the remaining number of newspapers in the DMA® is an odd number, then the median split would be determined by calculating whether the middle newspaper was closer in circulation size to the top portion of the median split or the bottom portion of the median split.

Table 4 Newspapers Selections for the Providence-New Bedford DMA® for a Weekday

Newspaper	Weekday Circulation
The Providence Journal*	160,610
The Standard-Times	35,831
The Herald News	23,209
Attleboro Sun Chronicle	20,403
The Call**	14,504
The Times	13,605
The Newport Daily News	12,853
Taunton Daily Gazette	12,491
The Westerly Sun***	10,367
Kent County Daily Times	4,290

*Largest newspaper in DMA®. Median split does not include this paper.
**Newspaper randomly chosen from top portion of median split.
***Newspaper randomly chosen from bottom portion of median split.

Before rank ordering the daily newspapers within a DMA®, researchers must make two decisions. First, they must decide on their definition of a "daily newspaper." For example, smaller circulation newspapers within DMAs® may not publish every day of the week. They may have a Tuesday-through-Saturday publication schedule or a Monday-to-Friday publication schedule. We propose that any newspaper that publishes at least three days a week be considered a daily newspaper. Such a publication schedule, we argue, would adequately represent daily news coverage for that newspaper, and it would clearly distinguish these papers from weekly newspapers.

Second, researchers must devise a method for determining newspaper circulation size; newspaper circulations typically fluctuate from weekday to weekend, and some newspapers even change within the week (see Table 1). The method that researchers choose depends on their research objectives. If the researchers' objective is to choose a few newspapers from each DMA® and follow their coverage of a topic for an extended period, then the best method of rank ordering the newspapers would be to calculate an average circulation for each newspaper based on the daily circulation numbers.[3] On the other hand, if the researchers' objective is to choose different newspapers from each DMA® for different sampling dates, then the researchers can use the daily circulation numbers for the sampling date[4] to determine the median split. Daily circulation numbers are available from a variety of sources such as Bacon's, the Peterson's Guide, and Standard Rate and Data Service.

TV Station Selection

Compared to newspaper selection, the strategy for choosing local TV news outlets is fairly easy, given the relatively small number of TV stations providing local news coverage within any given DMA®. In addition, not all TV stations listed in the DMA® will provide local news coverage. For example, some satellite TV stations do not carry local news. Consequently, the first step for researchers is to determine which stations in the DMA® carry local news.

In addition, researchers must ascertain which local news programs are appropriate to sample, given their research questions; that is, they must determine their sampling frame. For example, KUSA-TV in Denver carries local news at 5 a.m. (two hours), noon (30 minutes), 4 p.m. (a full hour), 5 p.m. (30 minutes), 6 p.m. (30 minutes), and 10 p.m. (30 minutes). Another station in the Denver DMA®, KWGN, carries local news at 6 a.m. (three hours) and again at 9 p.m. (a full hour).

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[3] The simplest approach to calculating an average daily circulation would be to sum the daily circulation numbers and then divide by the total number of publication days per week.

[4] Occasionally, a DMA® will not have daily newspapers published on a particular day of the week; in this case, if the DMA® is chosen on a day when no daily newspapers are published, researchers have two options. They can randomly choose another DMA® that does have daily papers published on the day chosen, or they can choose the day preceding the day chosen or the day following the day chosen.

One approach is for researchers to determine which news broadcast is most likely to carry the type of news that they are interested in analyzing. For example, morning newscasts tend to spend a large amount of their broadcast time covering traffic and weather news. Late afternoon news programs may be more likely to air human interest and "about town" stories, similar to those carried in the feature sections of newspapers. Later newscasts (e.g., the 9, 10, or 11 p.m. newscasts), on the other hand, may be more inclined to carry hard news, such as violent crime, given that the later viewing audience is more mature.

Once researchers have determined their sampling frame, they must decide how to sample from it. One approach is to rank order the appropriate local TV news programs based on their rating or audience share and then choose the highest ranking one. In this case, researchers could argue that they are analyzing the program with the largest potential effect. The problem with this system is that it can be difficult and expensive to obtain ratings or shares for individual news programs.

Another method, and the one advocated in this paper, is to address the potential influence that network affiliation may have on local news coverage while minimizing costs. Network affiliation is readily available, so it is simple for researchers to ensure that they have all networks represented in their sample. If researchers are sampling from each of the six DMA® strata outlined in Stage 1, they can randomly choose one to two stations from each network. Over the sampling timeframe, researchers would then obtain a sufficient number of newscasts from the different networks that would allow them to investigate the effect of network affiliation on local news coverage.

One major difficulty in obtaining TV local news programs from across the country is that there is no archive for local newscasts comparable to Vanderbilt University's archive of national news programs. Consequently, when researchers are constructing a national sample of local TV news coverage, they often must work directly with each station to obtain tapes. As the typical charge for dubbing and sending a newscast is relatively expensive (about $75-500, depending on the market), the primary limitation on sampling local TV news programs is the number of local station broadcasts that researchers can afford.

Stage III: Representativeness over the Course of the Year

Using constructed samples is important when researchers are attempting to represent local media coverage of a topic. Media coverage of specific topics can vary in a number of ways. First, newspaper stories are not evenly distributed among the days of the week (Riffe, Aust & Lacy, 1993); consequently, constructed samples produce better estimates than do random samples because constructed samples avoid potential oversampling of large news hole days like Sundays, and small news hole days like Saturdays (Riffe, Lacy, & Drager, 1996). Furthermore, constructed samples of evenings newscasts yield more accurate population estimates than do simple random samples (Riffe, Lacy, Nagovan, & Burkum, 1996).

Second, researchers must consider the level of coverage that they believe their topic will receive in the media. While Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998) recommend using two constructed weeks when researchers wish to infer to a year's worth of daily newspaper coverage, this approach may not yield a sufficient number of news stories if the topic of interest has a relatively low level of media coverage. Researchers need to ensure that the number of sampling dates they have chosen will result in a sufficient number of stories for analysis. In these cases, researchers may need to use a constructed month per year of analysis to maximize the chances of finding stories on their topic.

Second, researchers must consider whether there will be seasonal fluctuations in coverage of the topics they are studying. Some stories are more or less likely to appear in the media, depending on the time of year. For example, the prevalence of certain types of accidents fluctuates with the seasons. As a result, if researchers are analyzing coverage of topics with seasonal variation, they need to use a sampling strategy that increases their chances of capturing this seasonal variation.

One approach to achieving this year-round representation of news coverage is to draw a constructed week from each season, roughly represented as follows: Spring, March to May; Summer, June to August; Fall, September to November; and Winter, December to February. The optimal way to draw the constructed week from each season would then be to choose one Monday from among all the Mondays in each three-month period, choose one Tuesday from among all of the Tuesdays in each three-month period, etc. This strategy would result in researchers obtaining one constructed month for the year with each week representing a different season.

When researchers use the constructed month approach, they must devise a plan for maintaining balance with respect to days of the week for newspapers. That is, news hole size varies by day of the week. In particular, the Sunday news hole is much larger than the news hole for any other day of the week. This problem is most likely to occur for large newspapers in the first and second DMA® strata, given the relatively small number of DMAs® in these two strata.

To address this problem, we recommend that once a large newspaper from a given DMA® has been randomly chosen for a Sunday, that same newspaper not be chosen again on a Sunday until all other DMAs® in the strata have been chosen for a Sunday. For example, on the first Sunday of a constructed month, the New York DMA® was chosen. This DMA® should not be chosen again for a Sunday until the Los Angeles and Chicago DMAs® have been chosen for a Sunday.

Linking Local Media Coverage to Survey Data

The proposed multistage strategy for obtaining a national sample of local news coverage is particularly useful if researchers wish to link media coverage to a national survey of audience perceptions of a particular topic. The proposed sampling strategy would provide estimates of local daily newspaper and TV coverage in each of the six strata. These estimates of coverage in a given strata can be linked to the responses of survey respondents from that strata. This linkage increases the precision of researchers' estimates of the relative exposure of respondents to news coverage of various topics. It allows researchers to address questions, such as the following: (1) how does local news coverage affect respondents' perceived salience and concern about the topic under study? (2) what is the relationship between local media coverage of proposed solutions to particular issues/problems and survey respondents' support for those proposed solutions? and (3) which medium (i.e., daily newspapers or TV news) has a greater impact on respondents' perceptions of the topic under study?

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Appendix: DMA® Strata Table

Rank	MarketName	TVHHs	%US	Strata	Combined %
1	New York	6,874,990	6.82	1	6.82
2	Los Angeles	5,234,690	5.19	1	12.01
3	Chicago	3,204,710	3.18	1	15.19
4	Philadelphia	2,670,710	2.65	2	17.84
5	San Francisco-Oak-San Jose	2,423,120	2.40	2	20.25
6	Boston	2,210,580	2.19	2	22.44
7	Dallas-Ft. Worth	2,018,120	2.00	2	24.44
8	Washington, DC	1,999,870	1.98	2	26.43
9	Detroit	1,855,500	1.84	2	28.27
10	Atlanta	1,774,720	1.76	2	30.03
11	Houston	1,712,060	1.70	2	31.73
12	Seattle-Tacoma	1,591,100	1.58	2	33.30
13	Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota)	1,485,980	1.47	3	34.78
14	Minneapolis-St. Paul	1,481,050	1.47	3	36.25
15	Cleveland	1,479,020	1.47	3	37.71
16	Miami-Ft. Lauderdale	1,441,570	1.43	3	39.14
17	Phoenix	1,390,750	1.38	3	40.52
18	Denver	1,268,230	1.26	3	41.78
19	Sacramento-Stktn-Modesto	1,159,820	1.15	3	42.93
20	Pittsburgh	1,135,290	1.13	3	44.06
21	St. Louis	1,114,370	1.11	3	45.16
22	Orlando-Daytona Bch-Melbrn	1,101,920	1.09	3	46.26
23	Portland, OR	1,004,140	1.00	3	47.25
24	Baltimore	999,200	0.99	3	48.24
25	San Diego	980,620	0.97	3	49.22
26	Indianapolis	963,320	0.96	3	50.17
27	Hartford & New Haven	915,940	0.91	4	51.08
28	Charlotte	880,570	0.87	4	51.96
29	Raleigh-Durham	858,490	0.85	4	52.81
30	Nashville	826,090	0.82	4	53.63
31	Kansas City	820,580	0.81	4	54.44
32	Cincinnati	820,000	0.81	4	55.26
33	Milwaukee	815,640	0.81	4	56.07
34	Columbus, OH	757,860	0.75	4	56.82
35	Greenvll-Spart-Ashevll-And	732,490	0.73	4	57.54
36	Salt Lake City	720,860	0.72	4	58.26
37	San Antonio	684,730	0.68	4	58.94
38	Grand Rapids-Kalmzoo-B. Crk	671,320	0.67	4	59.60
39	Birmingham (Ann, Tusc)	667,650	0.66	4	60.27
40	Memphis	632,110	0.63	4	60.89
41	New Orleans	629,820	0.63	4	61.52
42	Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News	629,100	0.62	4	62.14
43	West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	623,760	0.62	4	62.76
44	Buffalo	621,460	0.62	4	63.38
45	Oklahoma City	600,240	0.60	4	63.97
46	Harrisburg-Lncstr-Leb-York	599,930	0.60	4	64.57
47	Greensboro-H. Point-W. Salem	592,770	0.59	4	65.16
48	Louisville	576,850	0.57	4	65.73
49	Alburquerque-Santa Fe	568,650	0.56	4	66.29
50	Providence-New Bedford	565,230	0.56	4	66.85

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Appendix: DMA® Strata Table

51	Wilkes-Barre-Scranton	555,400	0.55	5	67.41
52	Jacksonville	540,450	0.54	5	67.94
53	Las Vegas	521,200	0.52	5	68.46
54	Fresno-Visalia	511,050	0.51	5	68.97
55	Albany-Schenectady-Troy	507,000	0.50	5	69.47
56	Dayton	506,440	0.50	5	69.97
57	Little Rock-Pine Bluff	488,000	0.48	5	70.45
58	Tulsa	482,740	0.48	5	70.93
59	Charleston-Huntington, WV	481,410	0.48	5	71.41
60	Richmond-Petersburg	474,610	0.47	5	71.88
61	Austin	472,780	0.47	5	72.35
62	Mobile_Pensacola	471,920	0.47	5	72.82
63	Knoxville	451,870	0.45	5	73.27
64	Flint-Saginaw-Bay City	444,120	0.44	5	73.71
65	Wichita-Hutchinson Plus	443,690	0.44	5	74.15
66	Lexington	416,200	0.41	5	74.56
67	Toledo	411,450	0.41	5	74.97
68	Roanoke-Lynchburg	403,270	0.40	5	75.37
69	Green Bay-Appleton	392,300	0.39	5	75.76
70	Des Moines-Ames	387,850	0.39	5	76.14
71	Honolulu	385,790	0.38	5	76.53
72	Tucson	380,900	0.38	5	76.90
73	Omaha	373,320	0.37	5	77.27
74	Peducah-C. Gird-Harbg-Mt Vn	370,900	0.37	5	77.64
75	Shreveport	370,480	0.37	5	78.01
76	Syracuse	369,680	0.37	5	78.38
77	Rochester, NY	366,770	0.36	5	78.74
78	Spokane	366,080	0.36	5	79.10
79	Springfield, MO	363,500	0.36	5	79.47
80	Portland-Auburn	355,040	0.35	5	79.82
81	Ft. Meyers-Naples	343,550	0.34	5	80.16
82	Huntsville-Decatur	342,460	0.34	5	80.50
83	Champaign & Springfield-Decatur	341,990	0.34	5	80.84
84	Chattanooga	327,310	0.33	5	81.16
85	Madison	322,780	0.32	5	81.48
86	Columbia, SC	317,740	0.32	5	81.80
87	South Bend	314,920	0.31	5	82.11
88	Davenport-Rock Island-Moline,IL	308,790	0.31	5	82.42
89	Jackson, MS	305,830	0.30	5	82.72
90	Cedar Rapids-Waterloo & Dubuque	303,470	0.30	5	83.02
91	Burlington-Plattsburgh	295,480	0.29	5	83.31
92	Tri-Cities, TN-VA	293,150	0.29	6	83.60
93	Colorado Springs-Pueblo	290,830	0.29	6	83.89
94	Waco-Temple-Bryan	286,300	0.28	6	84.18
95	Johnstown-Altoona	286,070	0.28	6	84.46
96	El Paso	276,980	0.28	6	84.74
97	Baton Rouge	276,130	0.27	6	85.01
98	Evansville	274,660	0.27	6	85.28
99	Youngstown	272,990	0.27	6	85.55
100	Savannah	261,830	0.26	6	85.81
101	Lincoln & Hstngs-Krny Plus	260,190	0.26	6	86.07

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Appendix: DMA® Strata Table

102	Harlingen-Wslco-Brnsvl-Mca	254,460	0.25	6	86.32
103	Ft. Wayne	249,350	0.25	6	86.57
104	Charleston	243,230	0.24	6	86.81
105	Springfield-Holyoke	242,450	0.24	6	87.05
106	Greenville-New Bern-Washington	241,040	0.24	6	87.29
107	Lansing	237,860	0.24	6	87.53
108	Tyler-Longview (Lufkin & Nacogdoches)	236,760	0.24	6	87.76
109	Tallahasse, FL-Thomasville, GA	236,760	0.24	6	87.99
110	Peoria-Bloomington	229,770	0.23	6	88.22
111	Reno	228,880	0.23	6	88.45
112	Monterey-Salinas	228,630	0.23	6	88.67
113	Santa Barbra-Santa Maris-S.L. Obispo	228,350	0.23	6	88.90
114	Sioux Falls (Mitchell)	228,260	0.23	6	89.13
115	Augusta	228,240	0.23	6	89.35
116	Florence-Myrtle Beach	227,520	0.23	6	89.58
117	Montgomery	226,810	0.23	6	89.80
118	Ft. Smith-Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers	221,740	0.22	6	90.02
119	Fargo-Valley City	220,200	0.22	6	90.24
120	Traverse City-Cadillac	219,500	0.22	6	90.46
121	Macon	210,460	0.21	6	90.67
122	Eugene	209,790	0.21	6	90.88
123	Lafayette, LA	203,650	0.20	6	91.08
124	Yakima-Pasco-Rchlnd-Knnwck	199,850	0.20	6	91.28
125	Boise	199,760	0.20	6	91.47
126	Amarillo	191,450	0.19	6	91.66
127	Columbus, GA	186,790	0.19	6	91.85
128	Corpus Christi	184,900	0.18	6	92.03
129	La Crosse-Eau Claire	182,310	0.18	6	92.21
130	Bakersfield	181,660	0.18	6	92.39
131	Chico-Redding	176,610	0.18	6	92.57
132	Columbus-Tupelo-West Point	175,370	0.17	6	92.74
133	Duluth-Superior	175,000	0.17	6	92.92
134	Monroe, LA-El Dorado, AR	173,070	0.17	6	93.09
135	Rockford	170,680	0.17	6	93.26
136	Wausau-Rhinelander	165,760	0.16	6	93.42
137	Beaumont-Port Arthur	165,290	0.16	6	93.59
138	Topeka	157,750	0.16	6	93.74
139	Terre Haute	157,200	0.16	6	93.90
140	Wheeling, WV-Steubenville, OH	157,000	0.16	6	94.05
141	Erie	154,550	0.15	6	94.21
142	Medford-Klamath Falls	154,310	0.15	6	94.36
143	Wichita Falls, TX & Lawton, OK	153,330	0.15	6	94.51
144	Sioux City	150,630	0.15	6	94.66
145	Columbia-Jefferson City	150,220	0.15	6	94.81
146	Lubbock	147,570	0.15	6	94.96
147	Joplin, MO-Pittsburg, KS	147,330	0.15	6	95.10
148	Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill	140,580	0.14	6	95.24
149	Albany	139,280	0.14	6	95.38
150	Odessa-Midland	138,510	0.14	6	95.52
151	Wilmington	138,120	0.14	6	95.65
152	Minot-Bismark-Dickinson(Williston)	137.220	0.14	6	95.79

153	Rochest-Mason City-Austin	132,120	0.13	6	95.92
154	Binghamton	129,100	0.13	6	96.05
155	Anchorage	128,280	0.13	6	96.18
156	Bangor	128,140	0.13	6	96.30
157	Panama	122,790	0.12	6	96.42
158	Biloxi-Gulfport	117,040	0.12	6	96.54
159	Palm Springs	115,070	0.11	6	96.65
160	Sherman-Ada	113,640	0.11	6	96.77
161	Quincy-Hannibal-Keokuk	110,740	0.11	6	96.88
162	Salisbury	109,740	0.11	6	96.99
163	Abilene-Sweetwater	109,690	0.11	6	97.10
164	Clarksburg-Weston	106,140	0.11	6	97.20
165	Gainesville	104,170	0.10	6	97.30
166	Idaho Falls-Pocatello	103,840	0.10	6	97.41
167	Hattiesburg-Laurel	99,220	0.10	6	97.50
168	Utica	97,270	0.10	6	97.60
169	Billings	95,010	0.09	6	97.70
170	Elmira	92,370	0.09	6	97.79
171	Missoula	91,330	0.09	6	97.88
172	Dothan	91,320	0.09	6	97.97
173	Lake Charles	88,160	0.09	6	98.06
174	Yuma-El Centro	86,960	0.09	6	98.14
175	Rapid City	85,950	0.09	6	98.23
176	Watertown	84,730	0.08	6	98.31
177	Alexandria	82,740	0.08	6	98.39
178	Jonesboro	82,500	0.08	6	98.48
179	Marquette	81,770	0.08	6	98.56
180	Harrisonburg	77,850	0.08	6	98.63
181	Greenwood-Greenville	76,320	0.08	6	98.71
182	Bowling Green	75,560	0.08	6	98.78
183	Meridian	68,100	0.07	6	98.85
184	Jackson, TN	63,840	0.06	6	98.92
185	Parkersburg	61,960	0.06	6	98.98
186	Great Falls	60,880	0.06	6	99.04
187	Grand Junction-Montrose	59,210	0.06	6	99.10
188	Twin Falls	56,850	0.06	6	99.15
189	Eureka	56,650	0.06	6	99.21
190	Butte-Bozeman	54,600	0.05	6	99.26
191	Laredo	54,540	0.05	6	99.32
192	St. Joseph	53,780	0.05	6	99.37
193	Charlottesville	52,840	0.05	6	99.42
194	Lafayette	52,170	0.05	6	99.47
195	Mankato	52,000	0.05	6	99.53
196	San Angelo	51,460	0.05	6	99.58
197	Cheyenne-Scottsbluff, NW	50,020	0.05	6	99.63
198	Ottumwa-Kirksville	48,680	0.05	6	99.67
199	Casper-Riverton	48,280	0.05	6	99.72
200	Bend, OR	41,950	0.04	6	99.76
201	Lima	38,060	0.04	6	99.80
202	Zanesville	31,840	0.03	6	99.83
203	Fairbanks	30,700	0.03	6	99.86

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Appendix: DMA® Strata Table

204	Victoria	29,720	0.03	6	99.89
205	Presque Isle	27,580	0.03	6	99.92
206	Juneau	23,930	0.02	6	99.95
207	Helena	20,940	0.02	6	99.97
208	Alpena	16,530	0.02	6	99.98
209	North Platte	14,550	0.01	6	100.00
210	Glendive	3,900	0.00	6	100.00

Source: A.C. Nielsen Research, 2000

Newspaper

Running head: CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE "911"

Characterizations of the "911" Attack and Perpetrators in Three U.S. Elite Newspapers

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Characterizations of the "911" Attack and Perpetrators in Three U.S. Elite Newspapers

The topic of media coverage of political violence is not only of recent concern. Government officials, when facing political violence threatening the lives and properties of their countrymen, often advocate for the least possible media coverage of the violent events. In the aftermath of the 1985 TWA hijacking, for instance, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher criticized media coverage for being an ally of terrorism and urged news organizations to find "ways to starve the terrorist… of the oxygen of publicity" by limiting their coverage of terrorism (Apple, 1985). Her underlying assumption here is, as Schlesinger, Murdock, and Elliott (1983) put it, if a terrorist incident went unreported by the media, it would simply disappear by itself.

Unfortunately characteristics of political violence, such as timeliness, conflict, and sensationalism, fit perfectly under the requirement of newsworthiness in the journalism profession (Traugott & Brader, 2002) and make terrorism coverage an irresistible temptation for the mass media. It undoubtedly takes a totalitarian regime to force its mass media to shut the camera at the presence of such sensational events. In democratic societies, as a consequence, the media fumble ahead with a haunting dilemma: on the one hand, they aim at professionalism, trying to provide an overall view of an event with as little bias as possible; on the other hand, they have to avoid the charges of being "terrorist sympathizers," or even worse, "terrorist accomplices."

The mass media's performance in coping with this dilemma is reflected in how the media frame incidents of political violence. Media framing has, since it was introduced by Bateson (1972), been understood as a process of selecting and packaging ongoing issues (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Ryan, 1991; Ryan & Sim, 1990; Schon & Rein, 1994). The concept of framing involves both inclusion and exclusion. Through including (therefore emphasizing) and excluding (therefore de-emphasizing) such elements as key words, information sources, and sentences forming certain themes (Entman, 1991), media actors (mostly journalists) are able to create a frame wherein their audience are supposed to understand "a reality."

The way a news event is framed considerably affects the public's perception. Tuersky and Kahneman (1982), for instance, observed that people reversed their preference when a problem was framed in different ways. Krosnick and Alwin (1988), similarly, proposed that the ways questions were framed affected people's responses to attitude surveys and public opinion polls. Further studies demonstrated that framing effect was not limited to public opinion, but also extended to areas such as individual behavior (e.g., Rothman, Salovey, Antone, Keough, & Martin, 1993; Wilson, Wallston, & King, 1990). Therefore, it is of great significance to understand the way political violence is framed in the mass media.

Past research investigated a whole series of variables ranging from topics and story types to sources and labels used for characterizing the events and perpetrators of political violence. Although the majority of stories about political violence in daily newspapers and newsmagazines are hard news, it cannot be taken for granted that such reportage is an objective representation of what actually happens out there. As Epstein (1975) insightfully noted, the truth about an issue is established through the media's entire dependence on "self-interested 'sources'" (p. 3).

Sources and characterizations are among the most frequently addressed variables in studies on media coverage of political violence. As the processors and managers in conveying information through the media, sources function as important filters of news (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Past research has repeatedly demonstrated that official sources often receive emphasis in media coverage (Ryan, 1991; Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1980; Lasora & Reese, 1990; Haller, 1996), especially when concerning political violence (Atwater, 1987; Berkowitz, 1987; Paletz, Fozzard, & Ayanian, 1982; Zeng, 2002), while those viewpoints conflicting with the authority are rarely voiced (Gallimore, 1991; Picard, 1986). Miller (1982) also pointed out the problem of the media being "uncritical reflector" of official viewpoints (p. 17).

Another important feature of media coverage is the characterization of acts of political violence and those who perpetrate them (Weimann, 1985). As Miller (1982) suggested, source-dependency is an important variable in the manner in which perpetrators and behaviors of political violence are portrayed. That is to say, media coverage can be biased accounts for or against political violence and perpetrators. Numerous studies have investigated media use of labels employed for characterizing violent acts and perpetrators. The terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" are found on top of the list of labels by U.S. newspapers and newsmagazines when referring to political violence and people behind such events (e.g., Epstein, 1977; Simmons, 1991). A widely adopted practice in labeling studies is to divide the characterizations of incidents of political violence and perpetrators into three categories, negative, neutral, and positive. Weimann (1985), for example, suggested three categories of labels concerning political violence. According to him, negative labels are unfavorable words such as murderers and saboteurs, neutral ones include guerillas and army, and positive ones are favorable terms like patriots and freedom fighters. Later research showed that negative labels in U.S. newspapers and newsmagazines outnumbered labels with positive loadings (Steuter, 1990; Weimann & Winn, 1994), especially when American nationals were victimized or when the U.S. policy was challenged (Simmons & Lowry, 1990; Zeng, 2002).

A 1991 study by Picard and Adams deserves special attention here. The content analysis of the three elite U.S. daily newspapers' coverage of political violence from 1980 through 1985 distinguishes itself from other studies in this area in at least two senses. For one thing, instead of following the usual approach of a three-category label analysis, Picard and Adams suggested dichotomizing characterizations into two categories: nominal and descriptive. According to them, nominal characterizations carry as little subjective judgment as possible while descriptive ones convey connotative meanings. Therefore negative and positive labels identified in earlier studies mostly fall under the descriptive category, while neutral terms are now in the nominal category, which eventually helps provide a clearer view of whether media coverage of political violence are as objective as the Western media have so far alleged to be. For another thing, unlike other studies that treat source and characterization as separate and unrelated variables, Picard and Adams analyzed the use of characterizations by different sources, thus enabling the tracing of label usage tendency by each source. The results revealed that sources differ significantly in their choice of characterizations. Government officials tended to use more inflammatory and sensational terms, while media personnel and witnesses used words with less judgmental loadings. The authors also found that the media seldom quoted primary sources such as witnesses and government officials. To put it another way, the stories were mostly description and interpretation by the media themselves. Furthermore, for media characterizations, which accounted for 94.3 percent of the total characterizations, a significant difference existed between characterizations of acts and those of perpetrators. Specifically, the data demonstrated nominal characterizations were used most of the time when referring to acts, but more descriptive terms were employed in characterizing perpetrators.

The conclusion of the study was not immune to challenge since Picard and Adams (1991) chose without explanation to analyze only the first three characterizations of direct quotes and the first three of non-quotes in each news story, which meant that the picture they drew may not reflect the total features of characterization usage in the three newspapers.

The present study analyzes coverage of the bombings of the World Trade Center twin towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, which are the same elite U.S. newspapers Picard and Adams (1991) used for their characterization and source study. Based on their content analysis, this study asks the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the most frequently used characterizations of "911" perpetrators in the three elite U.S. daily newspapers?

RQ2: What are the most frequently used characterizations of the "911" attack in the three elite U.S. daily newspapers?

RQ3: Do characterizations of "911" perpetrators differ depending upon their sources?

RQ4: Do characterizations of the "911" attack differ depending upon their sources?

RQ5: Do types of characterizations for the attack and perpetrators combined differ depending upon their sources?

RQ6: By which source are characterizations of the "911" attack and perpetrators more likely to be expressed?

RQ7: Does the media source use different types of characterizations when referring to the act and perpetrators of the "911" attack?

Research question 3 will be answered through two hypotheses:

H1: The official source uses a higher percentage of descriptive characterizations than the media source when referring to "911" perpetrators.

H2: The official source uses a higher percentage of descriptive characterizations than the witness source when referring to "911" perpetrators.

Research question 4 will be answered through two hypotheses:

H3: The official source uses a higher percentage of descriptive characterizations than the media source when referring to "911" attack.

H4: The official source uses a higher percentage of descriptive characterizations than the witness source when referring to "911" attack.

Research question 6 will be answered through the following hypothesis:

H5: The official source is more frequently referred to than the witness source.

Research question 7 will be answered through two hypotheses:

H6: The media source uses more nominal than descriptive characterizations when referring to the "911" attack.

H7: The media source uses more descriptive than nominal characterizations when referring to "911" perpetrators.

Method

A comprehensive content analysis was conducted to answer the above research questions and test the hypotheses.

Sample

The stories analyzed in this study are taken from the three elite U.S. daily newspapers, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. The time period under analysis is one week from the bombings, that is, from September 11th through September 17th, 2001. Because there is no existing database of the stories for the present study, a keyword browsing for "World Trade Center" or "Pentagon" in the three newspapers for the seven-day period was conducted using the Lexis-Nexis news database. From the total of 2,037 stories retrieved, a systematic random sample of 204 stories was selected.

Coding Procedures

To obtain an overall view of the data, variables coded for each story include date, position in the newspaper, story length, byline, and story type. Byline is coded as wire service, such as the Reuters or the Associated Press, or local, including newspaper staff writers or the general public, or both, as a collective contribution by both wire service and local authors. Story type refers to hard news, commentary, or feature story. Hard news usually appears in news columns and is mostly an update of the event or its effect in political, economic, cultural, and other aspects of the society. Commentaries include editorials, letters to editor, and other comments by newspaper staff or the public, which are generally published in "Editorial Desk." Feature stories are frequently identified as "feature" in the newspaper, and they provide a more in-depth view of the event and contain a lot of relevant information from any possible perspectives.

Each characterization appearing in a story was taken down and coded for three variables. The first variable is the *object* of characterization, that is, who/ what is labeled, the attack or perpetrators? The second variable is *type* of characterization, which is either nominal or descriptive, as Picard and Adams (1991) classified in their study. Following their dichotomy, nominal terms merely present what happened and, if possible, who did that. They are mostly nouns, verbal nouns and verbs with the least possible connotative loadings. Examples are "hijacking," "attack(s)," "event(s)," "assault(s)," etc. Descriptive labels, however, describe the event and perpetrators using personal judgments. Many descriptive words are adjectives such as "terrorist," "evil," "despicable," but nouns like "carnage," "terror," "criminal," "murder," "terrorism" are also descriptive. Some expressions, for example, "act of war," "war against freedom," "war against civilization," etc., are also coded as descriptive in this study due to the inflammatory nature of the terms and the connotative meanings they contain.

The third variable, *source*, is the origin for each characterization of the event or perpetrators used in the story. Four categories are coded for this variable. The first category is the official source, including U.S. government officials and law enforcement personnel. The second category, witnesses of the event, includes whoever was present at the locale of the attack, including passengers on board the hijacked airplanes. However, those who were not present at the bombings but learned about the incident merely through interpersonal conversation or the mass media are not counted as witnesses. The third category is the media source, namely the authors of the news story. The last category, other, includes all sources not included in the first three categories.

The characterization words in the headline of each story are also coded in the same way as described in the previous text. However, they are not counted in the coding of characterization terms in the body of each story, because a word in a headline is not equally weighed as one in the text.

Intercoder reliability

Intercoder reliability is measured between the author and an independent coder, who was not informed of the research questions and hypotheses until after the coding work. A random sample of 30 stories (14.7% of the total) was picked from the sampling frame after the original sample of 204 was drawn (i.e., picked from the remaining 1,833 stories in the sampling frame). The two coders did the coding independently according to a coding book provided by the author. The coding book consists of operational definitions of each variable and relative categories. The intercoder reliability ranged from .86 to 1.00, using the Holsti's formula (Holsti, 1969). Specifically, the intercoder reliability of 1.00, a perfect agreement, is reached for page number, story type and byline, and .86 for characterizations identified, .97 for object of characterization, .90 for type of characterizations, and .94 for source.

Once high intercoder reliability was established, the coding of the total 204 stories was done by the independent coder, who participated in the intercoder reliability test, making it a single-coder content analysis (Harry, 2001).

Findings and Discussion

In the sampling frame of 2,037 news stories, 488 articles are published in the *Los Angeles Times* (24%), 1040 in the *New York Times* (51%), and 509 in the *Washington Post* (25%). The present study analyzed 204 stories. Table 1 displays the distribution of descriptive statistics such as newspapers, date, page number, story type, and byline. The average length of stories under analysis is 888 words. Half of the news articles are from the *New York Times* (50.5%), with the remaining half nearly equally divided between the *Los Angeles Times* (24.0%) and the *Washington Post* (25.5%), which approximately reflects the proportions by newspaper in the population and indicate at least in some degree that the sample is representative of the universe. Except for the day on which the bombings took place, there is approximately an equal number of stories for each of the six days from September 12th through 17th. Although the majority of the articles are published on inside pages, it should be noted that one out of ten stories appears on the front page, suggesting that the event was treated as momentous and highly newsworthy.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Total 204 Stories

		Frequency (Number of Stories)	**Percentage of Total (%)**
Paper	*Los Angeles Times*	49	24.0
	New York Times	103	50.5
	Washington Post	52	25.5
Date	Sept. 11	3	1.5
	Sept. 12	31	15.2
	Sept. 13	41	20.1
	Sept. 14	37	18.1
	Sept. 15	24	11.8
	Sept. 16	35	17.2
	Sept. 17	33	16.2
Page	Front	20	9.8
	Inside	184	90.2
Story Type	Hard News	176	86.3
	Commentary	22	10.8
	Feature	6	2.9
Byline	Wire	3	1.5
	Local	199	97.5
	Wire and Local	2	1.0

Average **Length of Story**: 888 words

Hard news accounts for 86.3 percent of the total stories and commentary 10.8 percent, the remaining being in-depth feature stories. For 97.5 percent of the time the newspapers depended exclusively upon themselves for news material, and another 1 percent of the time they cooperated with various wire services, while wire services alone provided only 1.5 percent of the 204 stories.

Before answering the research questions, it might be revealing to take a look at the headline data. Altogether 148 characterization words are recorded for the headlines, 94.6 percent of which are characterizations of the "911" attack (Table 2). Approximately one quarter of the total are descriptive terms and the remaining are nominal. Most of the characterizations are by the media (98%), with an exception of 2 percent by the official source, but none by witnesses. "Attack" and "attacked" are the most frequently appearing characterization words in headline, with the former accounting for 43.9 percent and the latter 20.9 percent of the total. "Terror" is the third most frequent characterization, representing 13.5 percent of the recorded total.

Table 2: Summary of Headline Characterizations

		Frequency (Number of Characterizations)	Percentage of Total (%)
Object of Characterizations	Attack	140	94.6
	Perpetrators	8	5.4
Type of Characterizations	Nominal	112	75.7
	Descriptive	36	24.3
Source	Official	3	2
	Media	145	98
Characterization words	*Attack*	65	43.9
	Attacked	31	20.9
	Terror	20	13.5

To answer research question 1, a total of 207 characterizations of "911" perpetrators are identified in the body of stories. The word "terrorist(s)" is the most frequently appearing, alone accounting for 59.9 percent of the total (Table 3). The second most frequent characterization word is "hijacker(s)", amounting to approximately a quarter of the total usage (24.2%). Two additional characterizations, "attacker(s)" and "extremist(s)", tie for the third position, each contributing to 4.8 percent of the total number of characterizations of perpetrators. The only remaining characterization word that accounts for at least 1 percent of the total is "fundamentalist(s)", adding another 1.4 percent and bringing the total to 96.2 percent represented by the five top-ranked characterization terms.

Table 3: Characterizations of "911" Perpetrators

Rank	Characterization Words	Number of Uses	Percentage of Total (%)
1	Terrorist(s)	124	59.9
2	Hijacker(s)	50	24.2
3	Attacker(s)	10	4.8
4	Extremist(s)	10	4.8
5	Fundamentalist(s)	3	1.4

A total of 894 characterizations of the "911" attack are recorded to answer research question 2. Comparing to characterizations of "911" perpetrators, not only is there a considerably higher frequency of appearance of characterizations, but the number of different words used in describing the attack is remarkably larger than that of words used when referring to perpetrators. The three most frequent characterization terms are "attack(s)", "terrorist", and "terrorism" (Table 4). The most frequent word, "attack(s)", and the second most frequent word, "terrorist", together represent nearly half of the total number of characterizations of the "911" attack. Five words come next in the ranking of frequency, which are "hijacked/ hijacking", "tragedy", "disaster", "terror", and "destruction". The five characterization terms add another 23.7 percent of the total to the 61.9 percent accounted for by the three top-ranked characterization words. An additional five words that accounted for at least 1 percent of the total are "assault", "war against (freedom, civilization, U.S.)", "catastrophe", "evil", and "carnage", bringing to 91.7 percent the percentage of the total resulting from all characterizations accounting for at least 1 percent.

Table 4: Characterizations of the "911" Attack

Rank	Characterization Words	Number of Uses	Percentage of Total (%)
1	Attack	301	33.7
2	Terrorist	135	15.1
3	Terrorism	117	13.1
4	Hijacked/ hijacking	72	8.1
5	Tragedy	49	5.5
6	Disaster	40	4.5
7	Terror	28	3.1
8	Destruction	22	2.5
9	Assault	14	1.6
10	War (against freedom, civilization, U.S.)	11	1.2
11	Catastrophe	11	1.2
12	Evil	11	1.2
13	Carnage	9	1.0

Chi-square analysis is conducted to answer the research question of whether the sources differ in the type of perpetrator characterizations they employ. The results presented in Table 5 suggest that there are differences in the type of characterizations used by different sources. Nonetheless, due to the problem of two cells with frequencies lower than 5, the conclusion cannot be drawn that the differences are significant. The same data are reanalyzed after treating the two low frequency cells (the witness characterizations) as missing data. The results of reanalysis are presented in Table 6. The chi-square value of 8.333 at two degrees of freedom indicates that there exist statistically significant differences in the type of perpetrator characterizations by the three sources, official, media, and other (*p.* < .05). As displayed in Table 6, the media source uses a higher percentage (77.1%) of descriptive perpetrator characterizations than the media source (66.9%). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. However, due to the low frequency cells in Table 5, hypothesis 2 cannot be tested. Regardless of source difference, nominal characterizations account for only 27.7 percent of the total, while descriptive characterizations represent a large majority (72.3%) of all the 202 recorded perpetrator characterizations.

Table 5: Characterizations of "911" Perpetrators by Different Sources

Source of Characterizations	Nominal Characterizations	Descriptive Characterizations	Totals
Official	8 (22.9%)	27 (77.1%)	35 (16.9%)
Witness	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5 (2.4%)
Media	46 (33.1%)	93 (66.9%)	139 (67.1%)
Other	2 (7.1%)	26 (92.9%)	28 (13.5%)
Total	60 (29%)	147 (71%)	207 (100%)

$X^2 = 14.590$, df = 3, *p.* = .002

Table 6: Characterizations of "911" Perpetrators by Different Sources (Witness Source Treated as Missing Value)

Source of Perpetrator Characterizations	Nominal Perpetrator Characterizations	Descriptive Perpetrator Characterizations	Totals
Official	8 (22.9%)	27 (77.1%)	35 (17.3%)
Media	46 (33.1%)	93 (66.9%)	139 (68.8%)
Other	2 (7.1%)	26 (92.9%)	28 (13.9%)
Total	56 (27.7%)	146 (72.3%)	202 (100%)

$X^2 = 8.333$, df = 2, *p.* = .016

Characterizations of the "911" attack by sources present a different picture. The total number of nominal characterizations for attack (519 uses, accounting for 58.1 % of the total 894 attack characterizations) does not differ dramatically from that of descriptive terms (375 uses, accounting for 41.9% of the total), as shown in Table 7. While the official source and other source still use fewer nominal than descriptive characterizations when referring to the attack as they do for perpetrators, nominal attack characterizations by the media outnumber descriptive attack characterizations. What is even more noteworthy is that all the 13 attack characterizations by the witness source are nominal. The chi-square value of 46.263 at three degrees of freedom shows that the differences are statistically significant (*p*. < .001). Both hypotheses 3 and 4 are supported, since the official source uses a higher percentage (64%) of descriptive attack terms than the media source (36.9%) and the witness source (0%).

Table 7: Characterizations of the "911" Attack by Different Sources

Source of Attack Characterizations	Nominal Attack Characterizations	Descriptive Attack Characterizations	Totals
Official	45 (36%)	80 (64%)	125 (14%)
Witness	13 (100%)	0 (0%)	13 (1.5%)
Media	414 (63.1%)	242 (36.9%)	656 (73.4%)
Other	47 (47%)	53 (53%)	100 (11.2%)
Total	519 (58.1%)	375 (41.9%)	894 (100%)

$X^2 = 46.263$, df = 3, *p*. = .000

Research question 5 asks whether the type of characterizations regardless of the object they characterize differ by source. As shown in Table 8, there exist significant differences in the type of characterizations used by various sources ($X^2 = 56.333$, *p*. < .001), which replicated the findings by Picard and Adams (1991). Additionally, in high agreement with previous research (Picard & Adams, 1991), the findings of this study demonstrate that both the media and the witness sources tend to use more nominal than descriptive characterizations. As a contrast, official characterizations tend to be descriptive, which is also the case with other source.

Table 8: Characterizations by Different Sources

Source of Characterizations	Nominal Characterizations	Descriptive Characterizations	Totals
Official	53 (33.1%)	107 (66.9%)	160 (14.5%)
Witness	17 (94.4%)	1 (5.6%)	18 (1.6%)
Media	460 (57.9%)	335 (42.1%)	795 (72.2%)
Other	49 (38.3%)	79 (61.7%)	128 (11.6%)
Total	579 (52.6%)	522 (47.4%)	1,101 (100%)

$X^2 = 56.333$, df = 3, *p*. = .000

The results in Table 9 answer the research question of whether there is a difference in source attribution. As the table displays, the news media are the most frequently referred to among the four types of sources, contributing 72.2 percent of the combined total of 1,101 characterizations recorded in the study. The official source ranks second, accounting for 14.5 percent of the total. Very rarely were witnesses sought to contribute to characterizations (a negligible 1.6 %). Compared to a previous study (Picard & Adams, 1991), where the media source contributed to 94.3 percent of total characterizations, our

Table 9: Summary of Source Attribution

Source	Number of Uses	Percentage of Total (%)
Official	160	14.5
Witness	18	1.6
Media	795	72.2
Other	128	11.6
Total	1,101	100

$X^2 = 1348.893$, df = 3, *p*. = .000

results suggest that over the past twenty years there have been changes in source attribution in the coverage of political violence by the three elite newspapers.

The changes have two-fold indication since Picard and Adams (1991) criticized that primary sources were quoted at too low a percentage to qualify the newspaper coverage of political violence as good media practice. On one hand it seems encouraging that primary sources such as officials and witnesses were used at a higher percentage than they were in the early 1990s, when the official source and witnesses totaled less than 6 percent. On the other hand, it is misleading if officials and witnesses are combined under the same category *primary source*. The trick demands simple mathematical calculation. While the combined percentage increases from 5.7 percent to the present 16.1 percent in twenty years, the official source has undoubtedly acquired a remarkably larger share in the total, but the witness source holds an even smaller proportion (1.6%) than it did two decades ago (2.4%).

The largest shareholder among all sources is still the news media, although it has already sacrificed some of its proportion. A total of 795 combined media characterizations are recorded. As shown in Table 10, a large majority (82.5%) are characterizations of the "911" attack, with the remaining 17.5 percent devoted to

Table 10: Types of Media Characterizations of the "911" Attack and Perpetrators

Object of Characterizations	**Nominal Characterizations**	**Descriptive Characterizations**	**Totals**
Perpetrators	46 (33.1%)	93 (66.9%)	139 (17.5%)
Attack	414 (63.1%)	242 (36.9%)	656 (82.5%)
Total	460 (57.9%)	335 (42.1%)	795

$X^2 = 42.383$, df = 1, *p*. = .000

characterization of perpetrators. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at the media's use of these two types of characterizations.

Among the characterizations of "911" perpetrators by the media, the word ranked first is "terrorist(s)", alone accounting for 57.6 percent of the total (Table 11). The second most frequent term is "hijacker(s)", adding another 29.5 percent to the total. Two additional words, "extremist(s)" and "attacker(s)", account for more than 1 percent, bringing the total percentage represented by characterizations above the 1 percent threshold to 97.2 percent of all 139 recorded media characterizations of perpetrators.

Table 11: Characterizations of "911" Perpetrators by Media

Rank	Characterization Words	Number of Uses	Percentage of Total (%)
1	Terrorist(s)	80	57.6
2	Hijacker(s)	41	29.5
3	Extremist(s)	9	6.5
4	Attacker(s)	5	3.6

A total of 656 characterizations of the "911" attack are employed by the media source. The top five characterizations accounted for 76.9 percent of the total media characterizations of the attack (Table 12). These terms are "attack(s)", "terrorist",

Table 12: Characterizations of the "911" Attack by Media

Rank	Characterization Words	Number of Uses	Percentage of Total (%)
1	Attack	241	36.7
2	Terrorist	110	16.8
3	Terrorism	59	9.0
4	Hijacked/ hijacking	56	8.6
5	Devastation	38	5.8
6	Tragedy	31	4.7
7	Terror	23	3.5
8	Destruction	16	2.4
9	Assault	12	1.8
10	Catastrophe	10	1.5

"terrorism", "hijacked/ hijacking", and "devastation". An additional five words each represented at least 1 percent of the total, bringing the percentage to 90.8 percent.

The results presented in Table 10 also answers research question 7, which asks whether the type of media characterizations differs on the object characterized. Of the 139 characterizations the media source employs to describe "911" perpetrators fewer than one third are nominal terms (33.1%). In contrast, 63.1 percent of the 656 attack characterizations by the media are nominal words. This suggests that the media tend to use descriptive terms to characterize perpetrators of the "911" attack, but are more likely to employ nominal words when referring to the event, which again replicate Picard and Adams' findings (1991). The Chi-square value of 42.383 at one degree of freedom shows that hypotheses 9 and 10 are both supported (*p.* < .001).

Discussion and Limitations

This study examines the patterns of the three U.S. elite daily newspapers in their coverage of the "911" attack during the one-week period since its occurrence. The results replicated past research (e.g., Picard & Adams, 1991) aspects of its findings: First, characterizations of acts and perpetrators of political violence differ significantly by source; second, in characterizing perpetrators of the "911" attack, officials, the media and other sources all tend to employ words that involve more or less subjective judgment and personal color and are often inflammatory; third, the media source is still the most frequently referred to among all types of sources. However, only officials and other sources demonstrate significantly heavier reliance on descriptive terms when characterizing the "911" attack; the media source uses far more nominal characterizations than descriptive words, and witnesses use only nominal terms in describing the event.

Taken all the characterizations of the attack and perpetrators as a whole, significant differences still exist in the type of characterizations by various sources. Witnesses and the media are the two sources that tend to employ nominal characterizations while officials and other sources are more likely to use descriptive terms.

A higher percentage of primary source quotation is identified in this study, as compared to past research. The media source accounts for only 72.2 percent of the total, compared with 94.3 percent previously reported by Picard and Adams (1991). The change suggests that the three newspapers are working towards the "good practice" target, which Picard and Adams criticized that the papers fell far short of. The progress should be qualified, nonetheless, in the sense that the measurement in this study is somewhat different from what Picard and Adams used a decade ago.

It must also be noted that among the 1,101 characterizations recorded in the analysis, only a very low percentage are quoted directly or indirectly from witnesses. The percentage dropped from 2.4 percent in Picard and Adams' study (1991) to the present 1.6 percent, making the already small share even more negligible. Witnesses are, in the strict sense, the only primary source available for coverage of the "911" attack, since perpetrators of the attack are inaccessible. Therefore, if, as Picard and Adams (1991) indicated, quotation from primary source is a criterion for good media practice, the three newspapers are doing a poorer rather than a better job than they used to.

Although no readily existing explanations have been identified in the literature (Picard & Adams, 1991), some factors may partially explain the tendencies in the type of characterizations employed by various sources. First, the government's function as the authority, particularly in times of political violence against its own regime, determines that the government will try to lead the nation's judgment of the violent event and those who commit it. As numerous studies (e.g., Wilkinson, 1977) have noted, in fighting against incidents of political violence, democratic governments frequently overreact to the extent as to limit the freedoms enjoyed by the public. Therefore, it is not unexpected that the government source tends to take every chance to add its own judgmental value in characterizing such events and perpetrators by using inflammatory terms, which are descriptive according to the definition in this study. Second, in addition to quoting the U.S. government, the three newspapers under analysis also depend heavily on foreign governments and international organizations such as the U.N. and the NATO, which form a considerable part of the "other" source. Similar to the government of the regime which is the target of the political violent event, foreign governments and international organizations also describe such incidents and perpetrators according to their own interests, therefore ending up with the "other" source using more descriptive than nominal characterizations. In contrast, witnesses are not as sophisticated as governments in using characterizations to achieve their own objectives, but merely describe the hard-bone fact that they see or hear personally. Consequently, very few characterizations are employed in such pure description, let alone descriptive characterizations involving personal judgments. Last but not the least, the media are always under the pressure of professionalism (although more often than not for the purpose of maximum economic benefit), which requires them to provide as complete and objective reportage as possible. The result is that the media tend to report hard news, describe events as mere happenings, and, if not possible to avoid extreme viewpoints, try to balance opposite views off. In the case of covering political violence against the regime in which they operate, nevertheless, the media can no longer stay disinterested. Patriotism advocated by the government is a yardstick for their performance as well. Accordingly, the media take different practices in characterizing the act of political violence and its perpetrators. For the act, which may be described as occurrence out there, the media elect to cover it more objectively by using more nominal characterizations. For perpetrators, who are viewed as the enemy of the whole nation, the media choose to show the public and the government their own judgment (in this case, patriotism) by employing more descriptive characterizations.

Two limitations of the study must be mentioned. First, the comparison of the findings of the present study with Picard and Adams' study is based on the assumption that the "911" attack, regardless of its particular target and therefore its effect upon the U.S. media, is an example of political violence. There exists a possibility that the changes in the three newspapers' coverage as noted in the present study is due to the particular nature of the "911" event itself. Second, different researchers may perceive the categories of nominal and descriptive characterizations differently, which results in low generalizability. Therefore, definitions based upon scientific measurement are highly desirable for future research on similar topics.

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Abstract

Experience and Internet News: The *Real* Reason for the Online News Reading Gender Gap

by
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Presented to:
Newspaper Division
AEJMC Annual Convention
Kansas City, MO
July 2003

A telephone survey of a southwestern metropolitan area found that the difference between men and women and reading news on the Internet is *not* due to their gender as previous studies have shown; the difference is due to an intervening variable, length of time reading news online. When length of time reading news online is held constant, the gender gap disappears, suggesting that there is no direct relationship between gender and frequency of reading news on the Internet. This finding implies that once women catch up with men in the length of time reading news online, the gender gap will likely disappear.

This study also compared men and women in 13 Internet-related areas, including access, reasons for reading news on the Internet, and attention to international news. Significant differences were found in only three areas: years on the Internet, years reading Internet news, reading Internet news at home. Men had more experience on the Internet and in reading Internet news. Women were significantly more likely than men to read Internet news at home.

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Introduction

Reading news is now the third most popular activity on the Internet behind e-mailing and Web browsing. According to the most recent UCLA Internet Report[1], 52% of the U.S. population now reads news online. After the development of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s and the Netscape Navigator Web browser in 1994, the Internet became attractive to consumers and media companies as a viable new medium for communication, entertainment, and news and information. The dramatic increase of news Web sites from 60 newspapers online in 1994[2] to more than 3,300 newspaper, television and cable news Web sites[3] by 2003 as well as the cross-promotion from traditional newspapers and television and cable newscasts have contributed to the popularity of news on the Internet.

Although reading news online is among the top three activities on the Internet, statistics continue to show that men and women do not read Internet news equally. In fact, the most recent Pew Research Center study reported that 57% of men read news online while only 43% of women read news on the Internet.[4] This gender disparity in attention to news is unique to the Internet; for other news media use, there is no difference between men and women.

Historically research studies have found differences in *how* men and women read newspapers and what content in the newspaper they pay attention to,[5] but no significant differences have been found in overall newspaper reading.[6] Similarly, no significant gender differences have been found in newsmagazine reading and regular attention paid to television news, cable news, and radio news.[7] If there is no gender difference in regular use of traditional and cable news, why is there a gender disparity in Internet news reading?[8] Is this difference in reading news on the Internet due to gender or is it due to other factors? This study seeks to answer that question by exploring the real reason for the gender gap in reading news on the Internet.

Theoretical Links

Diffusion of Innovation. The Internet has spread more rapidly than any other electronic technology, taking only 7 years to reach 30 percent of households, in comparison to 38 years for the telephone and 17 years for television. Diffusion of innovation theory provides insight into how and why new media and technologies such as the Internet, the telephone, and television are adopted into society. Rogers identified five characteristics that determine the acceptance of a technology by an individual: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability.[9] Fidler[10] added a sixth attribute—familiarity—explicating that new media technology essentially emerge or evolve from the metamorphosis of older media. Lin[11] emphasized the importance of resources or the high financial cost to the individual adoption of computer technology, which makes computers the most discontinuous of media technologies. Atkin, Jeffres and Neuendorf [12] noted that no discussion of Internet adoption would be complete without recognition of the requirement of computer ownership and skills. Before adopting a technology, Rogers said that an individual goes through a decision framework, which includes knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and reinforcement.[13]

Rogers also identified five groups based on the time it took to adopt technology: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards.[14] Early adopters were high risk takers with higher technical skills and higher education and income, while later adopters tended to have lower technical skills and socioeconomic status. Rogers found that demographic characteristics such as age[15], race, and gender were irrelevant to when individuals adopted an innovation.

Although the theory suggests there should not be a relationship between gender and adoption, a gender difference in Internet news reading continues to be found. The question is: Is the difference due to gender or to some other factors? This study will answer that question.

Literature Review

Adoption of Technology. Most studies on the adoption of technology have focused on the role of demographic variables and experience. James and Wotring[16] examined the adoption of electronic bulletin boards and found that users had better occupations, higher education, and higher incomes; however, it was not found that users were younger than the general population. The authors also found that more males than females used the technology and concluded, "the information empowered are imbalanced towards males."[17]

Jeffres and Atkin[18] examined the adoption of ISDN (Integrated Systems Digital Networks) technology, a technology that incorporates the merger of television, telephone, and the computer, and found a negative relationship between education and income and interest in the technology as a communication medium as well as a negative relationship between education and the use of technology for consumer purposes. Gender was unrelated to the communication variables.

Age and income were related to personal computer adoption in Lin's[19] study of adoption rate and adopter types (adopters, potential adopters, and non-adopters). Early adopters of personal computers tended to be younger (mean age of 35) and more affluent (mean annual income of $50,000). Education and gender did not predict adoption rates.

Age was inversely related to Internet access in an adoption study by Atkin and Jeffres[20] but education and income were positively related. The authors found no support for the hypotheses that communication needs drive higher rates of adoption or that Internet adopters are more cosmopolite than non-adopters.

After studying early adopters of the electronic newspaper, Weir[21] suggested that the usage of the electronic newspaper is purposeful to the fulfillment of certain uses and gratifications and concluded that individuals seek out the electronic newspaper more for the benefits it could afford them and less because of their experience and skill with computers and the Internet.

Howard et al.[22] found significant gender gaps in Internet usage, as well as differences in Internet usage between different age groups and socioeconomic groups. Women were considered more likely to seek health and religious information, research new jobs and play games online, while men used the Internet more to get news, sports, financial information, and access to government Web sites. The authors noted that variations in online behavior were a product of different levels of experience with the Internet. They said veteran Internet users whom they labeled "netizens" had been online for more than three years while newcomers had gained Internet access a year ago or less. Men were significantly more likely than women to be netizens and access news.

Gender and Internet Usage. In an effort to understand gender differences in adoption and usage of technology, many authors cited the uneasy relationship between females and computer technology. Commenting on the female technophobia, Turkle stated that "The computer has no inherent gender bias. But computer culture is not equally neutral."[23] Other authors also highlight the social construction of the computer as a male domain, which has contributed towards the socialization of females away from the adoption of computer technology.

Many studies find differences in usage of the Internet between men and women. Yet none concentrate analysis solely on Internet news reading. If gender disparities in news reading are mentioned, experience is hardly cited as a reason, and if it is, it is not afforded much attention. Sherman et al.[24] found that college men expressed more positive attitudes and hence reported higher levels of participation than college women in World Wide Web, newsgroups, MUDs, and chat rooms. Odell et al.[25] found that though the gender gap had disappeared in terms of time spent online, differences existed in the way that male and female undergraduates used the Internet. Males used the Internet significantly more to check news, play games, and listen to or copy music while women used the Internet more for e-mail and school research. Teo[26] found support for gender differences in Internet usage, in that males were more likely to browse, download, and purchase over the Internet. In measuring the gender gap on the Internet, Anandarajan et al.[27] attached no importance to gender as an antecedent factor to the Internet skills and activities of male and female MBA students. Though these authors concluded that gender differences in specific uses of the Internet were due more to differences in Internet experience, they do not explore experience as a variable. Similarly, Weiser[28] found differences between men and women in usage of the Internet, with men using the Internet more for entertainment and leisure while women use it for interpersonal communication and educational research. Many of the differences found between men and women disappeared when data from the separate online sample of research respondents were compared. These findings led the authors to conclude that differences in specific uses of the Internet stemmed primarily from differences in Internet experience. But once again, experience is offered as a conclusion and afforded no direct analysis within the study.

Other authors have found gender disparities in terms of intensity and frequency of Internet use, but few have attributed this directly to the male's greater level of experience. Bimber[29] found that gender affected frequency of use, as 25 percent of women versus 38 percent of men were frequent users. The study found that women outnumbered men in moderate use by 12 percent. The author concluded that gender effects did exist, and that women tended to be less intensive users of the Internet. Like Bimber, Ono and Zavodny[30] found that the gender gap in terms of being online had disappeared, but that gender gaps in the number of uses of the Internet and the frequency of Internet use persisted over time.

While past studies have not found a relationship between gender and adoption of technology, they have identified gender differences in Internet news use. But is that difference due to gender or some other factors? The present study looks at the real reason for this gender gap by exploring a three-variable model that posits that the differential Internet news reading pattern is *not* due to gender differences but to an intervening variable.

Intervening Variables. According to Rosenberg, the purpose of introducing an intervening or other third variable, which he calls a test factor, is to aid in the "meaningful interpretation of the relationship between two variables."[31] Furthermore, test factors such as intervening and antecedent variables "enable one to trace out causal sequences"[32] By testing for intervening variables between the two-variable relationship of gender and Internet news reading, this study seeks to identify the real reason for the gender gap in Internet news reading while simultaneously specifying an intervening variable that may serve in the role that Rosenberg called "...a landmark on the intellectual journey from cause to effect."[33]

Specifically, this study suggests that reading news on the Internet is a consequence of the intervening variable, number of years reading news online, which is related to an individual's gender.

Methodology

During September 2002, a telephone survey was conducted with 417 randomly selected adults in a southwestern metropolitan area, population approximately one million. Adults were randomly selected using a two-part procedure.[34] First, phone numbers were selected using systematic random sampling from the most recent metropolitan phone directory; secondly, a one was added to the last digit of the telephone number to ensure reaching new residents and unlisted numbers. Interviews were conducted by graduate and undergraduate journalism and communication students at a southwestern university and supervised by the fourth author who also designed the survey and trained the interviewers.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions including their opinions about the 2002 election, use of news media, and access to the Internet. Respondents who said they had access to the Internet were asked follow-up questions about the number of years using the Internet, frequency of reading news on the Internet as well as the number of years reading news on the

Internet. In order to profile online activity, survey respondents were also asked reasons for reading news on the Internet, where Internet news was read, and types of Internet news read, ranging from local to international.

Analysis. In order to test the proposition that the gender gap in Internet news reading is due to number of years reading Internet news, the authors used SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, to conduct the analysis in three stages. First, the analysis will determine if, as previous literature has found, there is a significant relationship between gender and Internet news reading. Second, the number of years reading Internet news will be examined for its relationship with gender and Internet news reading. This study will then test whether years reading Internet news is an intervening variable between gender and Internet news reading. The three-variable relationship is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Gender→Years reading Internet News→Internet News Reading

Results

Sample Profile. More than half of the 417 randomly selected adults were over 35 years of age, 60% had college degrees and 60% had household incomes of $60,000 or more. Seventy percent of respondents were white, 15% were Hispanic, and 7% were African-American. Women represented 52% of the respondents.

Newspapers were read daily by 35% of the respondents. Thirty percent of the respondents said they watched cable news every day, 24% watched local TV news, and 15% watched network news every day. Internet access was high with 85% of the respondents reporting they had access to the Internet. Among respondents with Internet access, 31% read news on the Internet daily.

Testing Years of Online News Reading as an Intervening Variable in the Gender and Internet News Reading Relationship. To determine if years of reading news on the Internet is a consequence of gender and a determinant of frequency of reading news on the Internet, one must first establish that significant relationships exist between each two-variable pair: gender and Internet news reading frequency, gender and years reading news online; Internet news reading frequency and years reading news online. If significant relationships are found, the variable that is hypothesized as intervening must be held constant and the statistical relationship between gender and Internet news reading frequency must vanish. The first pair of significant relationships can be found in Table 1 which shows that males (49%) are significantly more likely than females (31%) to read news on the Internet five days or more.

TABLE 1 *A Comparison of Male and Female Internet News Reading Frequency*

Read Internet News	Male (%)	Female (%)
Never or Seldom	30	49
1 to 4 Days a Week	22	21
5 or More Days	49	31
(Valid Cases)	(166)	(173)

X^2=14.923, d.f.=2, p<.001

Gender and Years Reading Internet News. Table 2 which displays the second pair of variables, shows that males are significantly more likely than females to have been reading Internet news longer. Over half of men have been reading Internet news five years or more in comparison to slightly over one quarter of females. Also, females are almost three times as likely to have begun reading Internet news within the past one or two years. Almost half of women have been reading Internet news for one to two years in comparison to 16 percent of men.

TABLE 2 *A Comparison of Male and Female on Years Reading Internet News*

Years Reading Internet News	Male (%)	Female (%)
1-2 Years	16	47
3-4 Years	31	26
5 Years or More	53	27
(Valid Cases)	(118)	(85)

X^2=24.748, d.f.=2, p<.001

Years of Reading Internet News and Internet News Reading Frequency. The final pair of variables can be found in Table 3 which shows that years reading news online is related to frequency of reading news on the Internet. Seventy-two percent of readers with five or more years experience read Internet news five days or more in comparison to half of readers with one to two years experience of reading Internet news.

TABLE 3 *Years Reading Internet News by Internet News Reading*

	Years Reading Internet News		
Internet News Reading	1-2 Years (%)	3-4 Years (%)	5 Years or More (%)
Never or Seldom	1	2	1
1 to 4 Days a Week	49	27	26
5 or More Days	50	71	72
(Valid Cases)	(60)	(59)	(87)

tau-b=.17, p<.01; gamma=.29, p<.01

Years Reading Internet News as an Intervening Variable. To test the three-variable relationship displayed in Figure 1 and determine if the gender gap in reading news on the Internet is real or if it is due to number of years reading Internet news, years reading Internet news is held constant. When years reading Internet news is held constant, the significant relationship between gender and Internet news reading that is displayed in Table 1, disappears. At the 1-2 year interval, 47% of males and 52% of females read Internet news 5 or more days a week (chi square significance=.71). At the 3-4 year interval, 69% of males and 73% of females read Internet news 5 or more days (chi square significance=.73). At the interval of 5 years or more, 75% of males and 65% of females read news on the Internet 5 or more days weekly (chi square significance=.51).

The successful test of the intervening variable provides support for the three-variable relationship displayed in Figure 1. In other words, years reading news online is a consequence of gender and a determinant of Internet news reading. Reading Internet news is not related directly to gender but to number of years reading Internet news. Males are significantly more likely to read Internet news due to the fact that they have been reading Internet news for more years than females.

Gender and Internet Activities. A look at Table 4 shows how little difference there is between males and females on the Internet. Only three of 13 Internet activities showed gender differences. In addition to length of time reading news on the Internet, men were also significantly more likely to be on the Internet longer than women: over half of men were on the Internet five years or more in comparison to slightly over one quarter of women. Women and men also differed on where they read news. Women (59%) were significantly more likely than men (32%) to read Internet news at home.

TABLE 4 *Male and Female Activity on the Internet*

	Males	Females	Significance
Activities			
Access to Internet	86%	86%	n.s.
5-plus years on Internet	73%	60%	p<.05
5-plus years reading Internet news	53%	27%	p<.001
Use other news sources the same	64%	68%	n.s.
Read Internet news for convenience	34%	39%	n.s.
Read Internet news at home	32%	59%	p<.001
Read local news often	25%	37%	n.s.
Read state news often	26%	30%	n.s.
Read election news on governor's race often	13%	14%	n.s.
Read election news on senate race often	13%	8%	n.s.
Read national news often	75%	66%	n.s.
Read international news often	64%	50%	n.s.
Go to candidate Web sites often	3%	1%	n.s.

Discussion

The difference between men and women and reading news on the Internet is not due to their gender as previous studies have shown; the difference is due to an intervening variable, length of time reading news online. Once length of time reading news online is held constant, the gender gap in reading news online disappears suggesting that there is no direct relationship between gender and frequency of reading news on the Internet. This finding suggests that once women have the same amount of experience reading news on the Internet as men, there will be no gender difference in reading online news. In other words, women are not less interested or less comfortable with reading news online. The intervening variable suggests that because women have spent less time reading news on the Internet, they read less frequently. This study suggests that once women catch up with men in the length of time reading news online, the gender difference will likely disappear.

These findings are significant on a number of levels. First, this study emphasized that when discussing usage of the Internet, particularly as a news medium, time of adoption is significant. Second, this study made an important contribution to a discussion of gendering of the Internet by providing evidence that no discussion of male and female activities, particularly news reading habits, is complete without taking into account the fact that men have greater experience than women with the Internet. As this study found, gender differences in reading news on the Internet are a direct consequence of the male's earlier adoption of online news mediums.

Third, this study recognizes the importance of examining Internet technology as a distinct medium from prior mass media innovations. As a workplace tool before a home technology, the adoption of the Internet favored those who had access to the computer and the Internet at work. As such, females were later adopters to both the computer and the Internet than men, a circumstance that has affected the frequency in the usage of the Internet as a news medium among the genders.

Finally, the results of this study should be important to newspaper and television news executives who may have thought that women were not a significant part of the readership of their news Web sites. Although women may now be reading less than men, that will likely change in the future when women have more experience reading news on the Internet. Once women have more experience reading news on the Internet, they will become as viable a market segment as men.

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Policing the Political Spinners: Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Political Adwatches from 1988-2000

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Policing the Political Spinners: Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Political Adwatches from 1988-2000

This study examined adwatch coverage in three national newspapers to explore if adwatches have increased over the last four presidential elections This study also compared adwatches and general advertising stories to determine if they focused on accuracy or strategic elements. The number of adwatches fluctuated between campaigns, paralleling the fervor with which journalists covered the campaign in general. While general advertising stories focused on strategy over accuracy, most adwatch stories examined both strategy and accuracy.

Policing the Political Spinners: Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Political Adwatches from 1988-2000

While journalists continue to come under fire for campaign coverage that focuses too much on the horse-race aspect of who is ahead and who is behind and not enough on analyzing candidate issue positions, at least one aspect of campaign coverage has earned praise from political observers: the birth of the political adwatch. While adwatches do have their critics (e.g. Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1996; Just et al., 1996; Tedesco et al, 2000), supporters argue they perform an important watchdog function because political ads are so integral to candidates' campaigns as well as how the public judge candidates (Haverhals, 2001). Adwatches can help educate the public about whether individual ads are truthful or not and ideally reduce the effects of misleading ads (Kaid et. al, 1995).

Most studies look at the effects of adwatches on voters, rather than look at the content of the adwatches themselves. Studies that do examine the content of political ads tend to focus on one election, while this study examines coverage of political adwatches over four campaigns. Finally, while most political adwatch studies only look at the adwatches themselves, this study will also examine how well the media performed its watchdog role by comparing coverage of adwatches with other political advertising stories. This study will examine several elements of coverage of political adwatches. More specifically, this research examines adwatch coverage in three national newspapers to explore whether the number of adwatches has increased over the last four presidential elections (1988 to 2000) in comparison to other political ad stories. This study will also compare adwatch and other political advertising stories in terms of whether they stress the accuracy of the ad or its strategic elements.

The Watchdog Role of the Press

The watchdog role of the press is among the oldest principles in journalism (Stone et al., 1997), originating from pronouncements of Edmund Burke in the seventeenth century

that the press had become the Third Estate of Parliament (Lichtenberg, 1990). In this country, the Founders feared that once in power, the government would not be able to resist trying to extend its power (Powe, 1991) and that the government would be tempted to use deception as a tool to achieve its political ends (Ungar, 1990). A watchdog press is deemed necessary to prevent the government from extending its power and to protect the people from having their rights usurped by the government (Levy, 1985; MacDougall, 1977; Powe, 1991; Ungar, 1990). It is said that although the Founders may not have clearly outlined a watchdog role for the press in drafting the Constitution, they were nevertheless implying a "Fourth Estate" role of the press as part of a semiofficial system of checks and balances (Altshull, 1990).

Under the watchdog theory of the press, the function of the press is to keep officers of the state from abusing or exceeding their authority (Siebert et al., 1956). The press is to be the watchdog over the workings of democracy, "ever vigilant to spot and expose any arbitrary or authoritarian practice" (Siebert et al, 1956, p. 56). The watchdog concept, then, argued that the press needs to be free to ensure that there is independent criticism and evaluation of the government and other institutions that might attempt to overstep their bounds of authority and impinge on the rights of the people (Lichtenberg,, 1990; Siebert et al., 1956).

Watchdog Press and Political Advertising

Political managers assert that the events in the campaign, along with the messages candidates produce through advertising, will shape the choices made by critical sectors of the electorate (McCubbins, 1992). Political ads are an important part of the matrix of political communications and events because they are the only messages that the candidates completely control (Spero, 1980).

The power of political advertising in the political campaign makes it is important for the press to monitor political advertising for several reasons. First, ads get people's attention and perform the role of a relied upon source of political information. Patterson and McClure (1976) found that the pubic received the majority of their information about the candidates' issue positions from ads rather than news reports, although this has been disputed by other studies (Braima, Sothirajah, & Johnson, 1996; Zhao & Chaffee, 1995). Second, the press needs to monitor political ads because the advertising has a history of being misleading and deceptive. Kern (1989) argues the tendency of ads to send out deceptive information is troubling because there will always be a percentage of the population who believe what they see on television, believing that political ads, like product ads, might exaggerate but will not lie. Finally, press coverage of political ads has come under fire in recent years because of the tendency for journalists to focus on the strategic elements of the ads rather than the accuracy of their messages (Jamieson, 1992; McCubbins, 1992). Therefore, by policing political advertising, the press will be monitoring a major strategy employed by candidates for delivering political messages, one that has a history of transmitting false and misleading information (Jamieson, 1992; Spero, 1980).

Political Adwatches

The political adwatch was designed specifically as a way for journalists to check the accuracy of political advertising. The print adwatch began in 1986 in the *Los Angeles Times* (Bennett, 1997). However, the practice didn't take hold until the 1990 off-year election following a plea from *Washington Post* columnist David Broder for journalists to probe the accuracy of political ad claims (Broder, 1990; Tedesco et al., 2000).

The political adwatch can be defined as a news media critique of candidate ads which is designed to inform the public about truthful or misleading advertising claims (Kaid et. al, 1995). They are specially denoted sections of the newspaper that analyze political ads to inform the public about claims that are exaggerated or false (Pfau & Louden, 1994). Adwatches are designed to educate voters by raising their awareness about the accuracy of the claims and supporting evidence in political advertisements (Bennett, 1997). The purpose

of adwatches is to "reduce the net influence of misleading ads" (Pfau & Louden, 1994, p. 326).

Researchers have debated the effectiveness of political adwatches, with effectiveness influenced by how the adwatches are produced.

Several studies have found that adwatches do blunt the effect of negative advertising. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) found that exposure to adwatches affects how people assess what is important and fair in a political commercial. They argue that the primary goal of adwatches is to dampen the power of misleading ads, and that changing voters' perceptions about the importance and fairness of a misleading ad presumably would reduce the weight of the ad in the decision-mailing process. Similarly, O'Sullivan and Geiger (1995) found that reading newspaper adwatch articles about political attack ads on televisions affected how respondents evaluated the candidates. When the claims of the candidate's ads were supported by the adwatch then support for the candidate increased and when the claims were rebutted there was a boomerang effect and support for the candidate decreased (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). O'Sullivan and Geiger argue that this indicates that newspaper critiques of political ads can be a powerful determinant of how the ads affect people's assessment of candidates. Following the elections of 1990, Dave Broder argued that press critiques of political ads had indeed affected the course of several elections (Kern & Wicks, 1994).

Press critiques of ads may have an impact on campaigns by making consultants more careful about what they say in ads. Even though adwatches may not be seen by as many people as the ads themselves, the fact that consultants are considering the adwatches while constructing ads makes them effective. Adwatches may deter negative campaigning by showing that the media will identify and publicize unsupported or inaccurate claims (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). In fact, consultants increasingly provide citations or footnotes in their ads verifying where the information comes from (McKinnon et al., 1996). Also, consultants now routinely provide journalists with specific documentation to support their

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advertising claims, which should attest to the effectiveness and importance of adwatches in policing political advertising (Richardson, 1998).

Adwatches are not without their critics, however. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1996) argued that adwatches simply recycle the candidate's message. They found that adwatches actually increased support for the candidate whose ad was scrutinized. However, Jamieson and Capella (1997) criticized the study for not looking at adwatches that examined the accuracy of ads. Indeed, when adwatches examine the strategic effectiveness of an ad rather than its accuracy, they can amplify and reinforce the ad's message (Just et al., 1996; Tedesco et al, 2000). Therefore, adwatches are found to be more effective when they focus on the accuracy rather than the strategy of advertising (Lemert et al., 1996). Leshner (2001) also found that the type of adwatch influences its effectiveness. Adwatch stories that critiqued ads that focused on a candidate's image produced damaged the image of the candidate making the attack. Adwatches that examined issue ads did not have effect on a candidate's evaluations.

Several studies have found that rather than shrinking the influence of political ads, adwatches may increase their power. This was most evident in 1988 when there were more stories on network news covering political advertising than in all presidential elections from 1972 to 1984 combined (Kaid et al., 1993). Jamieson (1992) argues that airing candidate ads during the news gives credibility and additional reach to political ads. Indeed, some studies suggest that adwatches can produce a boomerang effect in which the adwatch increases the persuasiveness of the ad being criticized (McKinnon & Kaid, 1999; Pfau & Louden, 1994).

Several other criticisms have been leveled against adwatches. First, they lack a systematic way of analyzing ads. Adwatches lack a uniform vocabulary for examining political ads (Tedesco et al., 1997; Richardson, 1998). Second, adwatches tend to focus on isolated claims within an ad rather than how the claims stack up against the record of the candidate . Third, most adwatches focus on the claims made in the ads rather than the audiovisual and narrative elements of the advertisements, even though these elements are the major way an ad conveys its message (Richardson, 1998). A fourth shortcoming of adwatches is that while 80 percent of an electorate may see a political ad, only 30 percent see the adwatch (Kern & Wicks, 1994). Fifth, because adwatches, by design, focus on the accuracy of an ad, they may exaggerate the dishonesty present in an ad, fueling the impression that ads are more dishonest than they actually are (Lichter & Noyes, 1996). Similarly, by focusing on the negative aspects of the campaign, they may amplify the public's cynicism by giving the impression that campaigns are built on lies and all candidates are basically dishonest (Frantzich, 2001). Finally, adwatches have become important tools of the campaigns themselves in creating negative ads. Adwatches are increasingly used by candidates to rebut claims made their opponent, making their opponent appear dishonest (Kern & Wicks, 1994).

The power of the campaign ad is increased by televised adwatches when the commercial is aired in its entirely and voters remember the pictures more than the words of the critique. Lemert and associates (1996) note that how effective an adwatch is ultimately depends on how it is produced. They suggest that the correspondent should be visually dominant on the screen and the ad itself should be visible on a monitor situated a few feet behind the correspondent. Richardson (1998) developed a host of suggestions for "building a better adwatch," including focusing on the candidate's entire record rather than on isolated claims in the ads, more seriously analyzing the audiovisual and narrative elements of the ads, conducting surveys or focus groups to discover what viewers are seeing, hearing and thinking about political ads in order to improve content of political ads, as well as providing additional time and space for more comprehensive adwatches.

Political Adwatches in Presidential Campaigns

Political adwatches in the 1988 campaign

Political adwatches grew out of dissatisfaction with media coverage of advertising in the 1988 presidential campaigns.

It has been said 1988 was the year of the negative ad (Kaid & Johnston, 1991; Devlin, 1989). Attack ads were so prevalent that they became the focus of media coverage (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). However, observers criticized how the media covered these ads. Jamieson (1988) claimed the media focused more on the strategic value of the ads rather than their accuracy. The news media also gave extensive coverage of these negative ads in their newscasts, magnifying rather than minimizing their impact. Stories about negative advertising became an integral part of newscasts, so that those ads were given much more additional exposure ("Accentuate," 1988). Not until late in the campaign did the networks analyze advertising in terms of accuracy rather than strategic value ("Campaign '88," 1988).

The media were harshly criticized for not challenging the false and misleading claims of political ads, and indeed magnifying their influence by running them as part of their regular news and commenting on their strategic value rather than their accuracy (Devlin, 1989; Jamieson, 1992). The press vowed to do better in the 1992 presidential campaign.

Adwatches in the 1992 campaign

Negative ads were used extensively in the 1992 presidential campaign, with the majority of ads by both Bill Clinton and George Bush criticizing their opponents (Devlin, 1993). However, observers gave the media higher marks for serving as a watchdog of candidates' advertising claims.

Observers note that the media gave increased attention to evaluating the accuracy of political ads not just their strategic value (Just et al., 1996; Milburn & Brown, 1995; Swanson, 1997). Therefore examining political ads became a focus of coverage in 1992 (Kern & Wicks, 1994).

Observers debate how well the media performed their watchdog role. Cavanaugh (1995) claimed that the media increasingly monitored paid political advertising for their truthfulness, preempting as well as limiting paid personal attacks by the candidates. On the other hand, Lemert and associates (1996) said that while commentators concluded that the news media did a better job of policing ads in 1992, network news left much room for improvement as CNN had more adwatches than the three networks combined. Whether journalists actually performed their watchdog role better in 1992 than 1988, they perceived that they improved. A poll conducted for the Times Mirror Center for The People and the Press found that 8 of 10 journalists rated coverage of the 1992 election as excellent or good (Cavanaugh, 1995).

Adwatches in the 1996 campaign

Observers noted that news coverage of the campaign was not terribly impressive. Press coverage declined in the 1996 with front-page coverage down 45 percent from 1992 (Bennett, 1997). The decline in overall coverage carried over to the coverage of political advertising. The number of adwatches declined 68 percent in broadcast media and 20 percent in print (Bennett, 1997). For instance, *The New York Times* printed only 15 adwatches during the general campaign, down from 29 in 1992. The *Washington Post* ran only seven adwatches, far fewer than the 29 from the 1992 campaign. With the number of adwatch stories down, they did not seem to be as pervasive or effective in 1996 (Bennett, 1997). West (1997) argues the 1996 adwatches were also less effective because they increasingly focused on the strategy rather than the accuracy of the ads. With the media not as diligently covering candidates' advertising, Jamieson noted that misleading ads increased from 14 percent in 1992 to 52 percent in 1996 (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 1996).

Observers blame the decline in coverage on the lack of a compelling race between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. The 1996 campaign was characterized as a "yawner," (Johnson, Hays, & Hays, 1998; Kurtz, 1997; Mashek, 1997), one in which both the press and the public were supposedly "bored to the bone" ("Bored to the Bone," 1996). Without an

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campaign spending by the candidates, the newspapers were not able to keep up with the flow of negative attack ads (West, 2001a).

Methods

This study examined the watchdog role of newspapers in the 1988 through 2000 election campaigns by examining how they covered political advertising, particularly adwatches, in three newspapers: *The New York Times, Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. *The New York Times* was chosen because it is one of the most influential papers in political circles (Johnson et al., 1996). The *Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* were selected because of their size and their influence in politics and to provide some geographic balance.

The unit of analysis was the news story or adwatch that focused on political advertising. This included special news features and news analysis articles. Items appearing on the op/ed page were not included. Only stories in which political advertising was the dominant theme were included in the study.

Coders were instructed to note whether an ad story was in the form of a typical news story, or designated as a special adwatch. McKinnon and associates (1996) showed that research has indicated a trend toward increasing use of "Truth Boxes" as a way of separating coverage of the accuracy of advertising from coverage of the effectiveness of an ad's approach.

Several things distinguish adwatches from news stories. First, adwatches do not have bylines. They are special features—often enclosed in a box, but not necessarily—that focused on the particulars of a certain ad. Adwatches usually have a picture from the actual ad they are examining, although not all do. Adwatches can be in traditional column form, but they cannot have a byline and their focus has to be the specifics about a particular ad or ads. Often these columns appear in the national news section of the newspapers under headlines like "The Ad campaign" or "Television Advertising," or "Adwatch" and they analyze the

accuracy or effectiveness of specific ads. In short, adwatches demonstrate a watchdog role of the press by policing ads for inaccurate statements.

This study will examine several elements of coverage of political adwatches. First, this study will explore whether the number of adwatches has increased over the four elections in comparison to other political ad stories. This study will also compare adwatch and other political advertising stories in terms of whether they emphasize strategy or accuracy of the ads.

While the number of political ad stories overall tends to dwarf the number of adwatches, the difference between the number of adwatches versus ad stories appears to have increased or fallen depending on the election. Because observers criticized the poor coverage of political advertising in the 1988 election (Jamieson, 1992; McCubbins, 1992) there should be more adwatches in 1992 than 1988. Also because the watchdog ardor of the press was cooled in the 1996 campaign because of the lack of a dramatic race (Kurtz, 1997), it is expected there will be fewer adwatches in 1996 than in 1992. Studies suggest that despite the closeness of the race, coverage only increased slightly and much of that coverage focused on the horse race and strategy (Hess, 2000; Norris, 2001). Therefore, the space devoted to monitoring ads decreased slightly in the 2000 presidential campaign (Frantzich, 2001)

H1 There will be significantly more news stories than adwatches
H2: The number of adwatches will significantly increase from 1988 to 1992.
H3: The number of adwatches will significantly decrease from 1992 to 1996.
H4: There will be no significant differences in adwatch from 1996 to 2000.

This study identified four types of stories: accuracy, strategy, organizational and general stories. Because this study is concerned with the watchdog role of advertising coverage, it will focus on the first two types: accuracy and strategy.[1]

Accuracy coverage is an element of the watchdog role of the press because it points out unfounded and unfair attacks by candidates and therefore helps keep politicians from making unwarranted charges against their opposition (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). Accuracy stories were defined as ones that looked at the content of a political ad to analyze the truthfulness of the claims it made. More specifically, as Lemert and associates (1996) suggest, accuracy stories critically examine what was said and not said in the ad and report inconsistencies between the ad and the candidate's career.

A strategy story, as Jamieson (1992) suggests, focuses on the strategic advantage an ad is intended to provide a candidate rather than the ad's accuracy or fairness. A strategy focus looks at the effectiveness of political advertising: what a candidate has to do to win, and how political ads and their messages might aid that goal. A strategy story, then does not attempt to gauge the accuracy of a spot, only its impact on the campaign.

Past studies suggest that strategy stories outnumber accuracy ones because the news media have traditionally focused on the strategic elements of an election (Jamieson, 1992; Johnson, 1993a, 1993b; Johnson et al., 1996; Patterson, 1980). However, because adwatches are designed primarily to examine accuracy, they may be more likely than advertising to stress accuracy of the ads.

H5: Political adwatch stories will stress accuracy more than strategy.

H6: Political adwatches will be more likely to stress accuracy of advertising than other ad stories.

After first analyzing frequencies, chi-squares will be run to determine if the percentage of adwatches changed from one election to another and whether adwatches and other political advertising stories differed in terms of type of coverage.

Results

Overall, 289 stories were coded, 43 in 1988, 122 stories in 1992, 53 stories in 1996 and 71 in 2000. Therefore, the number of stories about advertising almost tripled from 1988 to 1992, coverage decreased dramatically from 1992 to 1996, and then increased moderately from 1996 to 2000.

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exciting race to cover, overall coverage of the election declined and journalists spent less time monitoring candidates' claims in advertising and speeches (Kurtz, 1997)

Adwatches in the 2000 presidential campaign

The closeness of the 2000 presidential campaign meant that advertising took on increasing importance. The two presidential candidates and their campaigns spent $240 million in campaign advertising. George W. Bush spent more than any other candidate for president—his $134 million was 42 percent more than Bill Clinton spent four years earlier (Devlin, 1997; Freedman, 2002). While Bush ran a largely positive ad campaign, Gore relied more heavily on negative ads, particularly when he trailed in the polls (Freedman, 2002). However, the 2000 campaign also witnessed an increase in issue ads created and paid for by the political parties and independent groups, most of which carried a negative message. Therefore, overall the 2000 campaign featured more negative ads than the previous two (Devlin, 2001; West, 2001a, West 2001b).

Observers noted that despite the closeness of the race, campaign coverage increased only slightly from 1996 and was only about half of what it had been in 1992. When the media did focus on the campaign, it centered more on the horse race and strategy as well as the campaign style of the candidates rather than the issues and character of the candidates (Hess, 2000; Kellner, 2001; Norris, 2001).

With the media obsessed with who was ahead and who was behind, they spent less time policing the candidates' statements in ads. Frantzich (2001) found that presidential adwatches declined slightly from 1996 to 2000 (84 to 82), and were down significantly from 1992. He also discovered that just as the 2000 campaign focused primarily on the horse race, the number of adwatches devoted to discussing strategy increased from 32 in 1996 to 48 in 2000. West (2001a), on the other hand, indicates that at least *The New York Times* intensified its commitment to adwatches. He indicates the adwatches of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* focused on issue accuracy, but because of increased

Research has indicated that newspapers have increasingly relied on special adwatches as a way of separating accuracy coverage from strategy coverage (McKinnon and Kaid, 1999). Still, hypothesis 1 predicted that stories devoted to political ads in general would outnumber political adwatches. Hypothesis 1 was supported. The number of adwatch stories were dwarfed by other stories examining political advertising in the last four presidential campaigns as only 30 percent of advertising coverage was devoted to adwatches (Table 1).

While McKinnon and associates (1996) suggested that the amount of coverage devoted to adwatches has climbed in recent elections, this study predicted an ebb and flow in the number of adwatch stories that reflected the amount of energy the candidates spent analyzing the campaign.

The media were chastised for not analyzing misleading claims of political ads in the 1988 campaign (Devlin, 1989; Jamieson, 1992) and the adwatch grew out of a vow that journalists would do a better job in the 1992 campaign by critiquing the accuracy rather than simply the strategic value of advertising (Just et al., 1996; Kern & Wicks, 1994; Milburn & Brown, 1995). Hypothesis 2 predicted the number of adwatches would significantly increase from the 1988 to 1992 election. No adwatch stories were found in coverage of the 1988 campaign while in 1992 adwatches accounted for nearly 40 percent of all stories devoted to political advertising. Hypothesis 2 was supported.

The media had no horse race to cover in the 1996 election with Clinton leading by a large margin from start to finish. With the results of the election a foregone conclusion, the press characterized the campaign as boring and devoted fewer resources to it than in 1992 (Johnson, Hays, & Hays, 1998; Kurtz, 1997). Therefore, coverage of the campaign was down, including the number of stories examining political ads. This study predicted that the number of adwatches would significantly decrease from 1992 to 1996. Indeed, the percentage of advertising stories devoted to political adwatches dropped from 39 to 21 percent. Hypothesis 3 was supported.

The 2000 election was a reporter's dream. The lead changed hands several times in the course of the campaign, and finished so close that it was decided in the courts rather than the voting booth. Yet the media hardly seemed to notice as coverage increased only slightly from 1996 and most of that coverage focused on the horse race and the candidates' strategies (Hess, 2000; Norris, 2001). Therefore, it was predicted that adwatch coverage would remain largely unchanged from the 1996 campaign. However, the percentage of political adwatch stories jumped from 21 percent to 39 percent, the same level as in 1992 (although there were many more adwatch stories in 1992 than 2000). Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Research has shown that news stories about political advertising tend to focus on the strategy involved (Jamieson, 1992; McCubbins, 1992; West, 1993). For that reason, it was hypothesized that news stories about political ads would focus more on strategy. Also, because adwatches are, by design, meant to test the claims of political advertising (Pfau & Louden, 1994; Kaid et al, 1995: Tedesco et al, 2000), it was hypothesized that adwatches would concentrate more on accuracy than strategy. Both hypotheses were supported. While more than 6 in 10 political advertising news stories were devoted to general topics such as an article entitled "What's a campaign without all the mud?" which discussed political ads and their role in the election, stories devoted to strategy outnumbered those that discussed accuracy 30 to 3 percent. The percentages were almost reversed for political adwatches with 31 percent devoted to accuracy and 5 percent to strategy. However, most adwatches were not limited to a discussion of accuracy as nearly two thirds of the adwatches discussed both accuracy and strategy (Table 2).

Discussion

The political adwatch was born out of frustration by journalists that they had failed to perform their watchdog role in the 1988 presidential campaign. Rather than exposing the misleading advertisements run by the two political candidates, the media may have inadvertently amplified their effects by rerunning them on the evening news.

Several past studies have examined how effective political adwatches are in one election. However, this study examined coverage of political adwatches over four election campaigns (1988-2000). And while most political adwatch studies only focused on adwatches, this study also explored how well the media performed its watchdog role by comparing coverage of adwatches with other political advertising stories.

McKinnon and associates (1996) indicated that despite the increased use of adwatches to separate accuracy from strategy coverage, they still represented a relatively minor percentage of total election coverage. Indeed, this study found that over the four elections, the three newspapers studied devoted only 87 stories—30 percent of total ad stories—to adwatches during the general election campaign. This represents an average of seven adwatches per newspaper per campaign. *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz lamented after the 2000 campaign that media coverage of political advertising "doesn't even come close to being adequate" (Haverhals, 2001, p. 63). The media, he argued, still focus too much on charges and counter-charges leveled by candidates and not nearly enough on the accuracy of claims. This study also suggests that the level of attention paid to advertising through adwatches is not adequate.

Past studies have suggested that as journalists are increasingly aware of their obligation to police claims in political advertising, that political adwatches have increased each presidential election (McKinnon et al, 1996; West, 1993). This study found significant changes from election to election with the number of adwatches often being an indicator of the fervor with which journalists covered the campaign in general.

Previous research suggests that while the practice of adwatches began with the *Los Angeles Times* in 1986, they didn't begin in earnest until the 1990 off-year election (Tedesco et al., 2000). Indeed, no adwatches were found in the 1988 election, even in the *Los Angeles Times*. But scholars suggest that while adwatches themselves didn't appear

regularly until the 1990 campaign, that political ads were discussed extensively in the 1988 campaign because attack messages were so pervasive (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Newscasts regularly integrated stories of advertising into the news, giving the ads double exposure and accentuating their effect ("Accentuate," 1988). But this study suggests that the media's fascination of negative political advertising apparently was limited to television. Fewer stories were devoted to political advertising in 1988 than in any of the four elections studied.

Scholars suggest that the media failed to perform its watchdog function in the 1988 campaign because they were preoccupied with the strategy of political ads rather than the truthfulness of their message and therefore magnified the power of false advertising rather than minimized it by giving the negative ads more exposure (Jamieson, 1988, 1992). The media vowed to do a better job of policing claims made in candidate speeches and ads (Milburn & Brown, 1995; Swanson, 1997), and indeed examining political ads became a priority in the 1992 campaign (Kern & Wicks, 1994). Adwatches became prevalent in the 1992 campaign as a way for journalists to assess the accuracy of advertising claims rather than their strategic benefit. Indeed, the amount of space devoted to political advertising tripled from 1988 to 1992. While the appearance of adwatches accounted for much of the increased attention to political advertising (0 stories in 1988, 48 in 1992), the increased attention to advertising was not limited to adwatches as the number of regular news and feature stories devoted to political advertising jumped from 43 to 74.

The 1996 campaign may be remembered less for Bill Clinton's convincing victory at the ballot box and more for a turnout rate that dropped to its lowest level since 1996. Scholars suggest that the media were at least partially to blame. The poll-driven media convinced people the election was over before it even began (Bennett, 1997), and a prime focus of media coverage in the campaign was how utterly bored the electorate was with the campaign (Kurtz, 1997). With no horse race to cover, the amount of network coverage declined 40 percent. With that decline in overall coverage came decline in attention to political ads as predicted. The three newspapers coded ran fewer than half as many stories

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about political ads in the 1996 campaign than in 1992. But the decline was particularly precipitous among adwatch coverage as the percentage of **coverage** devoted to adwatches dropped by almost half (39 percent to 21 percent). Despite an increase in negative advertising, the bored media devoted considerably fewer resources to monitoring ads in 1996 than 1992.

The 2000 campaign was vastly different than the preceding one. The two candidates battled in the polls throughout the campaign with the lead changing hands several times before being thrown to the courts. While the media had an exciting horse race to cover, the amount of attention paid to the election increased only slightly from 1996, as the networks shifted campaign coverage from the evening news to the morning shows (Norris, 2001). When the media did focus on the campaign, it centered more on the horse race and strategy rather than the issues and character of the candidates (Hess, 2000; Norris, 2001). Past studies suggest that because media coverage concentrated on the horse race, they spent less time monitoring candidates' ads and the number of adwatches devoted to strategy rather than accuracy increased significantly (Frantzich, 2001). However, this study found that the number of advertising stories increased from 1996 to 2000. More importantly, the percentage of adwatch stories returned to 1992 levels (39 percent), although in real terms the three papers ran considerably more adwatches in 1996 than in 2000 (48 to 28). These findings are in line with West (2001a), who discovered *The New York Times* increased its commitment to monitoring political ads and that even in the atmosphere of horse-race journalism that adwatch spot continued to center on the accuracy of the ads.

Just and associates (1996) distinguished between watchdog and campaign process adwatches. Watchdog adwatches concentrate on the factual claims explicitly or implicitly made in the ad while campaign process adwatches focus on the effectiveness of the ad. Because adwatches, by design, are meant to test the accuracy of political ads (Kaid et al., 1995; Pfau & Louden, 1994, Tedesco et al., 2000), they are more likely than general political ad stories to focus on accuracy rather than strategy (Jamieson, 1992; McCubbins,

1992; West, 1993). Indeed, the number of general stories devoted to strategy outnumbered those that discussed accuracy 30 to 3 percent, while for adwatches there were more than six times as many accuracy (31 percent) as strategy stories (5 percent). However, the adwatches hardly ignored strategy as about two thirds (63%) of the adwatches were mixed, discussing both the accuracy and the strategy of the ad. While this study cannot directly test the effects of adwatches on voters, presumably mixing in discussions of both accuracy and strategy may blunt the influence of adwatches which are supposed to educate voters by making them aware of how accurate candidates claims are campaign advertisements (Bennett, 1997; Pfau & Louden, 1994).

The question remains, however, how effective political adwatches have been in policing the claims of politicians. Researchers debate about the effectiveness of political adwatches, with some researchers arguing that adwatches that dispute claims in the ad may damage the favorability of the candidate launching the attack (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995) while others contend that adwatches give additional reach and potency to political ads (Jamieson, 1992) and can therefore produce a boomerang effect in which the adwatch increases the effectiveness of the criticized ad (McKinnon & Kaid, 1999; Pfau & Louden, 1994). Perhaps a better measure of whether adwatches give journalists' watchdog role more bite is to examine its influence on the tone of the campaign. Presumably, if adwatches were effectively monitoring political ads, they would deter negative campaigning as campaign managers would be more careful not to run ads which feature unsupported or inaccurate claims (O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). However, studies suggest that the number of negative ads jumped from 14 percent in 1992 to 52 percent in 1996 (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 1996). The number of negative advertisements increased again in 2000 as the election witnessed a tremendous growth in issue ads created and paid for by the political parties and independent groups, most of which featured a negative message (Devlin, 2001; West, 2001a, West 2001b).

The increase in negative campaign coverage may not signal that adwatch coverage is ineffective; as suggested earlier, adwatches appeared too infrequently to staunch the flow of negative campaign messages. However, even in the 1992 election when journalists were praised for their diligence in policing ads, the majority of them were negative (Devlin, 1993). One way in which journalists could serve as more effective watchdogs of the press would be to create more effective adwatches. As other observers suggest, adwatches fail, in part, because they tend to focus on isolated facts of the advertisements rather than taking a broader perspective and comparing claims made in the ad with the record of the candidates (Richardson, 1998). As *Washington Post* media writer Kurtz suggests, adwatches need to examine several factors: "What was the candidate trying to accomplish with the ad? How did the claims stack up against his record and his opponent's record? What was left out? Were the facts used selectively, leaving a false or misleading impression?" (quoted in Richardson, 1998). Candidates have increasingly taken criticism of ads appearing in adwatches and employing them in their own negative ads. An adwatch that tried to reconcile ad claims with the candidate's record rather than looking at isolated facts may give candidates fewer "adbites" to use in their negative campaigns.

While studies suggest that adwatches typically include the script of the ad as well as describe its images, Richardson (1998) found that only 1 percent of adwatches critically examined the visuals. Because the public may pay more attention to the image of the advertisement than its message, it is critical that adwatches examine the audiovisual elements of the ads as well as its message. Finally, this study found that most adwatches critiqued the accuracy of the message as well as its effectiveness. This may be sending a mixed message. The reader needs to know whether political ads are telling the truth or misleading the reader to help make informed electoral decisions. Information about an ad's effectiveness simply adds to the overabundance of strategy information that is already polluting the media's campaign coverage.

Several limitations of this study need to be noted. While this study examined three of the leading news organizations who conduct adwatches (*The New York Times, Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*), it ignored other newspapers such as the *Washington Post* who regularly conduct adwatches, as well as adwatches conducted in the electronic media. This study examined types of adwatches, but not tone of adwatches to determine how much journalists are indeed critiquing the ads. This study also examined the message of the advertisements overall, failing to distinguish between the visual and narrative message of the ads.

While this study found that political adwatches are doing little to reduce the flow of negative campaigning, the authors are not suggesting adwatches are futile and thus should be abandoned. Adwatches are too few in number to have an important watchdog role; they get lost not only among regular campaign coverage but among coverage of political advertising as well. The adwatches not only need to be employed more often, they need to be retooled. They need to center on the accuracy of political ads as they were designed to do and not also examine strategy of the ad. They need to examine audiovisual elements, and not just the messages of the ads. The journalists' watchdog function of policing candidate claims in political ads is an important one, one that it needs to do more often and more effectively in the 2004 presidential campaign.

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Table 1. Comparisons of coverage between adwatches and other political advertising stories during the 1988-2000 presidential campaigns

	1988	1992	1996	2000
Advertising Stories	100%	61%	79%	61%
Adwatch Stories	0	39	21	39
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	43	122	53	71

X^2 1988-1992: 23.9, 1 d.f., $p < .001$
X^2 1992-1996: 5.7, 1 d.f., $p < .05$
X^2 1996-2000: 4.9, 1 d,f,, $p < .05$

Table 2: Comparisons of type of coverage between adwatches and other political advertising stories during the 1988-2000 presidential campaigns

	Advertising Story	Adwatch
Strategy	30%	5%
Accuracy	3	31
General	61	1
Strategy & Accuracy	6	63
	100%	100%
N=	202	87

$X^2=196.3$, 3 d.f., $p < .001$

NOTES

1. Organizational stories are those that focus on how a political ad was produced or financed within the party organization (Johnson, 1993a). General stories are those that do not fit into any above category, but that mention political advertising.

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Under Construction: Measures of Community-Building at Newspaper Web Sites

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Under Construction: Measures of Community-Building at Newspaper Web Sites

Abstract

Working from the conceptualizations of Rheingold, Preece, Kim, Outing, and others, this paper examines the structure of interactive discussion forums embedded in U.S. newspapers' online news sites. Researchers carried out a content analysis of 47 news sites, coding for 19 variables. Online sites of newspapers in four circulation strata were sampled. The study found no difference in structure based on newspaper circulation size but found suggestions that production choices can have implications for local discourse associated with the news.

Under Construction: Measures of Community-Building at Newspaper Web Sites

"The successful local paper of today has gone far toward, and is prophetic of, the larger local journalism which will parallel the needs of the primary unit of democracy, the small town. But it has only begun to realize the possibilities of its field from the standpoint of intensive cultivation, both on the news and business sides. In the town today, there is a growing need for intercommunication between people."[1]

More than 80 years ago and a time well before the age of Internet, Emerson P. Harris and Florence Harris Hooke, (1923) authors of the preceding quotation, recognized the value of interaction between community members and the newspaper. They claimed, "The paper of the past has been passive, the paper of the future must be active and aggressive" (p. 303). According to the entrepreneurial pair, a newspaper's failure to engage citizens in dialogue and respond to its community's needs would lead to its demise.

In this information era, Harris and Hooke's words still ring true. Newspapers today still need to engage members of their community in a dialogue and provide relevant news to readers. However, with the advent of the Internet and popularity of the World Wide Web, the traditional relationship between newspapers and readers is changing. According to a recent government study, more than 143 million Americans – or roughly 54 percent of the population – use the Internet, and two million Americans go online monthly (*A nation online: How Americans are expanding their use of the Internet*, 2002). Of these 143 million users, more than 90 million Americans having participated in online

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communities, a cyberspace feature quickly becoming a staple of online communication (Horrigan, 2001). Further, a recent report by the Center for Media Research found that Americans, while at work, "depend heavily on the Internet for breaking news and information compared to traditional media" (*At-workers prefer Internet for news and information*, 2003). Moreover, studies have demonstrated that online newspaper sites attract a substantial audience from their local markets. *The Washington Post's* online site, for instance, was found to attract 40.2 percent of the adults in its immediate market (Greenspan, 2002) .

These statistics provide a clear and urgent message to print newspapers that have been struggling through a decade of declining readership. As Mark Surman and Darren Wershler-Henry note, "[T]he printing press has always lent itself to one-to-many communication .... Print doesn't lend itself to massive dialogues between groups of people, or even two-way conversations" (2001, p. 46) The Internet changes this dialogue. By embedding digital features such as discussion boards into news sites to promote communal online discourse, newspapers have an opportunity to create a steady and relevant dialogue involving readers in ways that heed Harris and Hooke's early call for what they termed "intercommunication."

This study, seeking to explore this issue, uses a quantitative content analysis to examine an interactive feature that today offers perhaps the most potential for active and shared public discourse, discussion boards. Such boards are locations on the Internet offering templates where users can read and post messages. They are known by many names including forums, boards, and groups. They range from the primitive to the sophisticated, depending upon software applications and skills of the users. In most cases, discussion boards are employed to share and discuss information and opinions. As for online newspaper sites, most boards invite comments about issues in the news. Why do boards exist at all on news sites? First, as Greenspan noted, they attract Internet-oriented readers, drawing more audience members to eyeball articles, images, and advertisements. Second, they keep readers on the sites longer. Finally, and less commercially, they offer a means for newspapers to perform the public service of engendering democratic discourse through communities of users.

At issue in this study is how and whether the structure of such discussion boards may serve to promote a kind of familiar intercommunication – or, in modern parlance, interactivity – that some researchers suggest may come to characterize news consumption as this Information Age matures. In this study, the authors analyzed newspaper online sites in an attempt to gather baseline data to begin exploring the determinants of online community-building around the delivery of daily news.

Communities, News and the Net

Scholars and futurists have in the past decade begun to see the productive uses of community-building as a worthy achievement of computer-mediated communication (Rheingold, 2000; Surman & Wershler-Henry, 2001; Wellman, 2001; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). If the benefits derived from social intercourse – what is often today termed social capital – can be obtained in interpersonal experiences, some have maintained, so too can people expect to gain from personal interactions across cyberspace (N. Lin, 2001). Some theorists claim that the Internet promises to increase social rewards by providing infinitely greater linkages promoting everything from the trade in ideas to commerce. Says Lin: "I suggest that indeed we are witnessing a revolutionary rise of social capital, as represented by cybernetworks. In fact, we are witnessing a new era in which social capital will soon supersede personal capital in significance and effect" (2001, p. 215).

Oldenburg, a sociologist, has observed that people need "third places" away from the responsibilities and hierarchies of work and home to commune in horizontal, supportive social structures for pleasure and often-playful, unconstrained discourse (1999). Rheingold (2000) and Kim (2000) have extended that notion to the Internet, where they find the same opportunities and functions at play. The difference is that such communing occurs not in pubs and civic plazas but across space and time, often through Web sites (Lesser, Fontaine, & Slusher, 2000).

Kim says that discussion boards (or forums) are among the most common types of online features for fostering interaction that can last "over a period of days, weeks, even months" (2000, p. 34). These online gathering places need not harbor people for lifetime commitments. When no longer useful, they may simply "fold up or simply fade away" (Surman & Wershler-Henry, 2001, p. 25). Although no real scholarly consensus has emerged on the semantic distinctions between online "networks" and "communities," it is sufficient for this paper to look upon online communities as gatherings of people who are united by similar interests, willing to share in ongoing discussions, and likely, as Kim says, to "enhance their sense of belonging" (p. 34). Certainly, differences exist among online community sites in terms of function and longevity. An online community associated with a news site would seem to favor transient uses more than, say, sites designed for long-term support or relationship-building such as a site for cancer survivors.

Scholarly investigations into online news applications have lately provided rich layers of insight. These studies have looked at areas such as credibility and perception

(Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Sundar, 1999, 2000), agenda-setting (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002; Roberts, Wanta, & Dzwo, 2002), geographic orientations (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Singer, 2001) and the applications of technical features (Dibean & Garrison, 2001; C. A. Lin & Jeffres, 2001; Massey & Levy, 1999). One important study about popular Web sites in general – but not about news sites in particular – helped to establish a foundation for this study by finding significant relationships between home-page structure and site traffic. That study, by Bucy, Lang, Potter, and Grabe (1999), involved a content analysis of 496 Web sites, both commercial and non-commercial, and found that structural complexities in site design did influence use.

Researchers have just begun to explore connections between news sites and interactive features. Zeng and Li (2003) drew on previous work on news-site interactivity (Gubman & Greer, 1997; Schultz, 1999), and found that circulation size of newspapers predicted the degree of interactivity on their online sites. Using an index of interactivity encompassing several kinds of features, from email to discussion boards to hypertext, Zeng and Li's analysis of 106 newspaper sites suggested that larger-circulation papers offered more interactive features than others. That study differs from this one in the range of examined features. Zeng and Li constructed an index joining various interactive elements. This study chose to isolate just one, the discussion board, and to code for specific elements that, taken together, might help to identify determinants of a news site's capacity to foster a community of users.

As for examining distinct types of interactive features, Garrison (2003) has begun to isolate factors explaining reporters' use of email. One of the few studies to take a more detailed look at discussion boards (Schultz, 2002) found a "disconnect" between the discussions on the boards and the practices of journalists at *The New York Times*.

The works of prominent journalism professionals and critics have offered similar findings. Palser, online news editor at the Poynter Institute, describes discussion forums are "well-suited for catharsis, conversation and companionship," but rarely provide information that "jumps the fence" into the newsroom (Palser, 2002, p. 58). These works suggest that the worth of interactivity provided through discussion boards remains unresolved. Whether such boards will become viable parts of electronically delivered news is the key question that motives studies such as this one. Clearly, technical aspects are still being sorted out. In a somewhat encouraging approach, the new media critic for *Editor & Publisher* magazine offers a list of features for making discussion boards salient to online sites (Outing, 2000). One key bit of online advice: To use active monitors to guide discussions. "One of the most common mistakes is to open a discussion board on a topic and expect users to make it work," Outing says. "The person 'behind the curtain' is all important." [*note: no page number. This is from online article.]*

This is theory put in very plain terms. That person behind the curtain can be seen, for the purposes of this paper, as a gatekeeper – one operating in the fluid circumstances of cyberspace. As Outing's comment suggests, the gatekeeping function serves to explain a process in which managers of the news organization make decisions that affect the opportunities of site visitors to take part in interactive conversations and in the construction of online communities. The gatekeeper also has some role in determining, as Palser said, whether discourse on discussion boards built into news sites will indeed have any effect on the news itself. As Singer (1998; 2001) has noted, the gatekeeping taking place with interactive media forces an expansive definition of the process. If some of the benefits and delights of community-building arrive in the unintended consequences, as Rheingold (2000) asserts, then gatekeepers must be as intent on the free flow of interaction as the controlled flow of information.

If the notion of creative feedback is good, though, so is the idea that gatekeepers must have the means to promote useful interactivity. That can mean imposing rules or providing other sorts of features that serve to maintain expression at socially acceptable levels. As Ogdin noted, "With no enforceable rules, any behavior is acceptable. If any behavior is acceptable, there are no norms, no mores, no taboos unique to the community. In that case, what is called community is probably merely an [sic] loosely-knit group of people with some common interest" (online, 2002). Others have warned that under assumed identities in cyberspace, the threat of real consequences for one's behavior seems obscure. Rules are thus a mechanism for sites to prevent inappropriate behavior while encouraging a communal environment. Rules can ensure the vitality and longevity of online communities (Depew, 2001), but they should be kept to a minimum and be based on everyday human courtesy (Rheingold, 1998).

This study considers the combined suggestions of theorists and critics alike and finds that virtually all of them offer the same general beginning: Gatekeepers, in their fluid roles, remain critical to the successful operation of online interactivity related to the delivery of news. Gatekeepers are the guardians and the benefactors of structure. Although it may be true, as Palser argues, that the largest papers have the best resources for structuring discussion boards in ways that promote useful discourse, it also would seem to be true that interactivity is built less of hard bricks than of pliable software programs and the time taken to add text and participate in discussions. The willingness of site managers and staffers to provide structures to guide online discussions, then, would seem to dictate some important degree of usefulness and vitality that might give discussion boards worthy roles in the overall delivery and consumption of online news.

Research Questions

The previous discussion leads to the following research questions:

- What kinds of structural features exist today on the discussion boards of newspaper online sites?
- Does circulation size of the papers influence the availability of structure?
- What kinds of structural strategies, if any, do these sites have to connect discussion boards with the news?

Method

This study involves a descriptive, quantitative content analysis of 47 newspaper online news sites. Because this was one of the first attempts to explore structural implications for news-site interactivity, the attempt was to create a list of variables derived from discussions in the available literature, including suggestions for structural features from Rheingold (2000), Outing (2000), Preece (2000), and Kim (2000). Their works described features intended to promote usability and, by extension, a healthy and useful interaction among site users. A total of 19 variables were coded, each aimed at identifying the existence of certain features such as direct links from a home page to a discussion board or requirements for site registration. Conducting a content analysis of online data involves special considerations (McMillan, 2000; Stempel & Stewart, 2000). All of the coding for structural variables took place on one day, February 7, 2003, to control for the possibility that online site templates can change, even over a matter of days. Each variable was coded in a binary mode, with two possible choices. In other words, the individual coding was something akin to a check-off for the existence of a structural feature.

The intent was to gather descriptive data that would offer baseline information on the use – or lack of use – of structural features. Because this area of study is so new, the researchers extracted variables from discussions in the academic and trade literature of online community-building and from a study identifying interactive components of 10 online non-news sites. The variables derived from those searches provided the basis for this study. Later, the 19 variables were collapsed into three scaled variables meant to capture categories of *architecture, function,* and *rules* as they relate to website structure promoting interactivity.

Architectural variables comprised the largest category. They included evaluations of whether a newspaper's homepage included a direct link to its discussion board and whether the discussion board provided an archive of previous posts. The function category included variables such as whether the newspaper included a purpose statement or objective about the discussion board and whether the newspaper included a privacy policy about how information collected during the registration process would be used by the newspaper. Variables analyzed under the rules category included whether there were consequences for users who did to follow the discussion board's rules and whether users could register complaints about other discussion board users. These three scaled variables – architecture, function, and rules -- were used in analyses of variance with variables representing different circulation sizes of newspapers that sponsor online news sites. A discussion of the sampling strategy follows.

Sampling

The strategy for this study was to ensure that the sample of online sites would reflect equitable proportions of sites from different sizes of newspapers. This was based on a presupposition that a newspaper's print circulation remains an important influence on the production of its online site. Because the population distribution of daily U.S. newspapers is skewed toward papers of relatively small circulation size, a random sampling of sites would produce a preponderance of data reflecting the practices of such small-daily sites. To ensure that the study more equitably captured data from the sites of variously sized papers, the authors sought a stratified sample. Working from the Audit Bureau of Circulation's daily circulation figures for 2000, the researchers divided all newspapers into four strata, each representing one-fourth of the ABC's total daily circulation of 52.1 million. Thus, each stratum comprised papers whose combined circulation made up slightly more than 13 million paid subscribers. The top stratum of the largest circulation-papers contained just 23 members. The bottom stratum, in turn, held 838 members.[2] Twelve newspapers were chosen randomly within each stratum. Table 1 provides the list of the newspapers whose sites were sampled.

[Table 1 about here]

The coding protocol called for coders to first identify whether the chosen newspapers indeed had online sites that included discussion forums. If no forums were

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found after a step-by-step search, coders moved down the circulation list to the following newspaper and continued with the same protocol. In the case of the top stratum (largest papers), researchers doubled back to the top of the list and eventually exhausted the population of 23 newspapers, finding only 11 sites with discussion boards. All had Web sites, but less than half contained discussion boards. In the other three strata – where there were proportionally more newspapers to pick through – the 12 sites were successfully found and coded. Online sites were most commonly found in the second stratum, which was represented primarily by regional newspapers such as *The Oregonian* and *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, two organizations with busy online discussion boards. But boards became far less common at the sites of smaller papers. The largest gap that researchers encountered while working down the circulation list was a range of 12 papers before finding a site with a discussion board. That occurred in the stratum of the smallest-sized papers. Some of those papers had no online news sites at all. The authors carried out the coding, each doing half of the newspaper sites from each stratum. To test reliability, each coded five of the same sites, representing slightly more than 10% of the total. Reflecting the ease of explicitly identifying the dichotomous variables (i.e., was there or was there not a link?), coders recorded matching scores and thus earned a value of 1 in a reliability test of Scott's *Pi*.

Results

This research project sought to answer questions about the type and frequency of structural features promoting discussion boards on newspaper web sites, variance in those features by circulation size of host newspapers, and indications of links between discussion boards and the news. The descriptive data offer a snapshot of how newspaper online sites were structured in February 2003. Table 2 provides frequencies for all 19 variables. Of the 19 variables surveyed, two key features were found on every site: (1) users were allowed to post messages anonymously or pseudo-anonymously, and (2) all discussions boards were accessible at no cost. Interactivity on such discussion boards was fundamentally impersonal and free.

[Table 2 about here]

There were some constraints. It is worth noting that users were required to go through an online registration process at most (87%) sites, although they were required to register to read posts at just a few (4%). Thus, users who might have begun by scanning news on the site easily could have shifted to a discussion board to continue in a "lurking" mode, reading the postings of more active participants. To join in posting messages would have required a relatively simple extra step. The registration process typically required online users to create a username and password and to provide an e-mail address. Most of the sites required online users to disclose their age. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act prohibits Web sites from collecting information from children under age 13. Further, four out of every five sites, such as *The Charlotte Observer* and *Staten Island Advance,* allowed users to create public profiles for review by other users. These profiles gave users the option of including personal information such as their homepages, their likes and dislikes, mottos, political affiliation, race, and religion. This sharing of personal information through pseudonymous identities offers a way of sharing – or of inventing – to facilitate a sense of online community. It must be noted that the newspaper sites did not verify the accuracy of the information online users provided during registration. Users could easily post false or misleading information and still engage in the discussion forums.

Sites showed mixed results in providing structural constraints aimed at maintaining orderliness. Explicit rules of conduct and consequences for breaking those rules were available on roughly half of the sites. Participants could register complaints about other posters almost half the time (45%) but had the ability to publicly rate or evaluate other posters less often, about a quarter of the sites (23%). In other words, most sites were more willing to maintain administrative control over postings than to allow participants to get involved in judging the merits of each others' messages. Overall, those structural features that allowed for unconstrained discourse tended to outweigh the features aimed at managing it. Table 3 provides a summary of the five features found most often at online sites and the five least used.

[Table 3 about here]

To seek evidence about relationships between structural features and the circulation sizes of newspapers operating online sites, researchers carried out an analysis of variance to search for differences among the four print-circulation strata for the three structural variables. The three coded variables were further collapsed into a single variable that served to measure the overall amount of structural features associated with a site's discussion boards. No significant differences were found at the 95% confidence interval. Among the four circulation-size strata, the highest mean score, 10.17, was for sites associated with the smallest papers. In other words, those sites, on average, contained more features promoting interactivity via discussion boards than did the larger papers. Though not significantly higher, this difference prompted a closer inspection.

A closer inspection of the data offers the suggestion of one influence. Seven of the 47 online sites linked their readers to the same discussion board, a national site called *e-the-People*. All seven were in the lower two strata, and six were in the quarter of the sample representing the sites of the newspapers with the smallest circulation sizes. This one site, then, accounted for half of statum D's sites and thus had a large influence on its outcome in coding. In this study, by the way, researchers encountered no other outside boards similar to *e-the-People,* where links carried users away from the news site and into a public forum that served a geographically indistinct audience. In all other cases, discussion boards were embedded within a paper's Web site.

Rather than serving as a forum unique to a news site, *e-the-People* operates as a non-profit, participant-centered sphere of discourse on issues of national and global importance.[1] The *e-the-people* site did not have the highest number of coded structural features in the study. That distinction went to the *San Diego Union-Tribune's* site, which had 16 out of the possible 19 features. But the e-the-People's site inventory was sufficient in comparison with other sites to raise the mean score for the seven *e-the-People* sites significantly higher than the mean for the other 40 sites (see Table 4).

[Table 4 about here]

One noteworthy aspect of *e-the-People* is that newspapers may link to it at no cost. This free use allows news executives with smaller news operations an alternative to paying a licensing fee to vendors for interactive software for their own sites. They can simply enlist with *e-the-People*. None of the seven sites using *e-the-People* in this study also provided its own discussion forums.[2] Some of the sites did aim to retain a degree of local identification by framing the *e-the-People* site with the news organization's own logo or by including its own online advertising. Most did not.

The *e-the-People* site thus offered a structural dilemma. At the same time that it provided some of the most pervasive features promoting interactivity – such as a sophisticated means for readers to evaluate and comment upon the postings of others – it also effectively removed any opportunity for users to identify with or offer feedback to the news site providing the initial link. Users who went to their local news sites to stay connected and to take part in a digital democracy found themselves removed from the place where the news was presented. They ended up in an encouraging forum where discussions trend toward theoretical treatments of national concerns. One thread on the *e-the-People* board during the time of the coding focused on the ideas of Noam Chomsky; another carried a debate on the essays of classicist-commentator Victor Davis Hanson. This represents a wide variation from the local flavor of the *Marshall News Messenger's* discussion boards, where the site prompted users to "sound off on local issues" and included a category for give-and-take on the prospects for high school sports teams in East Texas.

This willingness to link to *e-the-People* certainly does rank as a strategy in connecting discussion boards to the news, but it would seem to be ultimately a negative strategy since it carries readers away from the news site. The online community fostered within the *e-the-People* site would seem to be removed by geography and by digital space from the host newspaper's site. In almost all cases, in fact, researchers found little evidence that hosts had built strategic features into their discussion boards to give users the sense that their posts on the boards might somehow be tied to the site's more pervasive journalistic functions. The most obvious strategic connection was simply in the formatting of a site's home page. Many include a link to "forums" right alongside other links to "news" and "opinion" and other listings. Once inside a discussion board, however, users generally found few promptings. A few sites invited comments specifically about columnists' recent works, and the rare sites that were overtly monitored – such as that at *The New York Times* – offered occasional queries based on recent news events for participants to address. Primarily, though, the discussion boards appeared to function as publicly accessible pastures outside the news sites' journalistic limits.

Conclusions

This study found a range of practice among newspaper sites on the use of structural elements promoting interactive discussions and, eventually, community-building. This range suggests that the news organizations clearly have not arrived at a consensual standard for operating discussion boards. Indeed, there is some evidence here leading to preliminary conclusions that many papers have adopted a less-than-ambitious plan to integrate such open discussions with their public functions in delivering news. While three-fourths of online newspapers included links to their discussion boards on their homepages encouraging users to participate in the online forum, two-thirds failed to include a purpose or mission statement about the discussion board. Thus, the role of discussion boards on most online news sites has yet to be clearly articulated and defined.

Structural elements that allow users to evaluate each others' posts might serve to refine discussions and to allow users to share slightly in some of the gatekeeping or monitorial functions. However, less than a quarter of the sites provided that function.

One notable exception was *e-the-People*, where participants' cumulative judgments for and against a posting were carried above the message itself. It might be said that, to borrow from another genre of popular media culture, the *e-the-People* site was the one place where user response was so powerful that participants could effectively vote one another "off the island."

Such relatively advanced functioning of *e-the-People* emerged as one of the more intriguing issues. The more popular a post, the higher the post appeared on the discussion board. The site's rating system also supported its mission to "re-write the code of conduct in the democracy conversation, [and] reject politics-as-usual. We can demand that people start listening, really listening, to each other. We can demand that people engage each other on terms of mutual respect." The rating system not only made users accountable for the content of their posts but also served to nurture reputations for online discussion participants. Like traditional offline community forums, such as actual town hall meetings, *e-the-People* participants create identities for themselves through their words and actions and can be held accountable for their conduct. All this has the potential for encouraging community-building in a virtual context. This structure, however, was an anomaly in this study's evaluation of discussion boards, and the practice of sending users to a detached site has its serious limitations as well. News sites more ideally might find ways to adopt some of *e-the-People's* features into their own, identifiable boards.

Gatekeeping and Editorial Control

Missing from most discussion boards was direct discourse between journalists and online users. Discussion boards offer newspapers opportunities to engage in two-way conversations with users and practice the democratic ideals newspapers embrace.

However, the only interaction found between journalists and users was actually outside the scope of this analysis; it was through email (one-to-one and private) or guided and selectively edited "live" chats with columnists and pundits. Such edited chats represented a stronger and more unidirectional method of gatekeeping. For the largest of the host newspapers, such as *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and *USA Today*, these methods provided for more control and, at times, for the packaging of posted opinion in a format that approached a shaping of interactive comment into news, much as a call-in radio show filters and selects queries from the public. Additionally, *Times* editors sometimes selected favorite posts and packaged them as an online collection. Such selective editing represents a safer strategy. Indeed, it does create a connection between interactivity and news.

Given the convenience and control built into this firmer model of gatekeeping, it should also be said that neither of these features – email or chat – encourage the wide-open and robust debate that might become a benefit of discussion boards. More editorial control can mean less vitality and, potentially, less diversity of voice and opinion. When journalists retain the last call, their news organization's view of the world is less apt to be challenged. There is a strong indication here that the largest of the newspapers are not comfortable with discussion boards. After all, only 11 of the 23 papers in the top stratum even provided such wide-open interactivity. The second stratum of newspaper sites revealed the most action, both in numbers of sites; virtually every site sampled had boards. It tended to be at the regional newspaper sites, then, where discussion boards flourished, though the existence of structural features fluctuated.

The general lack of gatekeeper involvement found in this study thus also provided benefits. For example, almost all of the news sites allowed users to post new threads or topics to the discussion boards. Instead of centralizing control, most newspapers allowed users to create their own discourse. At the same time, most newspapers used the limited vehicle of registration to hold users somewhat accountable for their posts. Sites with strong user-evaluation tools thus encouraged other participants to take part in the accountability system as well. In such systems, the use of pseudonyms allows for both freedom and constraint – a license for free expression but a social sanctioning that evolves as posters begin to build their reputations and become part of an online community.

Connections to the News

While many online newspapers provided the requisite software enabling discussion boards and laying the foundation for the creation of communities, the sites often failed to include the features that would tailor boards to their readers. Again the example of *e-the-People* is a prime illustration. Those sites providing links to it missed the chance to nurture communities of participants who might begin to perceive the newspaper's site as a kind of public sphere where people naturally congregate to engage with ideas and events of the day. Among the features that build community are those that providing archival searches, which serve to build history, and those that invite users to register complaints about others. The latter allows for self-policing. Only a minority of newspapers included features that encouraged community-centered dialogue. For example, less than 10% of the online news sites provided users with the structural feature that would notify them that someone responded to their post. And less than a quarter of the sites allowed other users to rate posts by other users.

Certainly, one reason that newspapers have resisted this sort of community-building is an understandable reliance on routine. Information flows from newspapers to community have been asymmetrical. Traditionally, letters to the editor and op-ed columns are about as far as most papers have traveled in terms of everyday interactivity of content. In an era of instant communication and interconnectivity, the digital delivery of mass mediated news through the Internet has changed this relationship. However, this study's findings suggest that online news sites have yet to fully embrace the implications of this evolution. Studies of non-news Web sites have shown that Americans use discussion boards as a way to create community. Discusssion boards connected to the daily flow of news would seem to be fertile places for community-building, notably among those who value free expression and the willingness to expand the range of available ideas. There are limitations, as Palser (2002) and others suggest. But this study offers some evidence that some of these limitations have not been fully addressed.

There may also be new twists and developments in the forms and functions of online news that promote more harmonious integration between news and free speech. As online news delivery continues to win interest for its potential benefits, such as a means of reversing the circulation declines in print news delivery, interactive features such as discussion boards deserve to attract more interest as a structure of things to come. For online sites to create space as valuable resources for reader communities, they will need to emulate the functions that are clearly winning over American consumers in other corners of cyberspace. Certainly, the functioning of online communities located within news sites will vary from other types of virtual communities. Participants will be driven more by the impulsive charms of free speech than by the more cautious needs of those seeking emotional support or lifelong friendships. Such news-driven communities will need to serve as gathering places where citizens mingle, argue, and share and, perhaps, where journalists occasionally join in the fray. As a form, discussion boards on newspaper web sites are clearly still under construction.

A prime limitation in a study such as this is the rapid rate of change occurring by week and by day on newspaper sites. Data is difficult to capture and inferences are difficult to maintain when structural features, along with postings themselves, arise and disappear so quickly on the Internet. The authors are aware that some sites have dropped their boards since coding occurred, and others have made structural changes to reflect the fluid nature of digital technology and marketing. Any study about interactivity with the news is likely to suffer the same consequences in this period of almost constant renovation of Web sites. Further research needs to incorporate designs that promise to record as much data as possible at a single time, not an easy task when studying the transient and seemingly endless supply of interactive postings. A worthwhile and ambitious next step would be to seek measures of content and vitality of discussion boards in order to investigate how the structures of news sites promote variations in participation.

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Notes

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[1] Most of the links to *e-the-People* were listed on the news sites' home pages as "Town Hall." Thus, users clicking on the link for the first time likely did not realize that they would be connected to a national site. The *e-the-People* site can be accessed at http://www.e-thepeople.org/ as well as through the above-mentioned links on various online news sites. The seven sites linking to *e-the-People* are identified in Table 1.

[2] Though not sampled in this study, *The Arizona Daily Star* newspaper of Tucson offers an example of an affiliated online news site that provides links both to its own discussion boards and to *e-the-People*. It can be accessed at http://www.azstarnet.com . The paper, with a 2000 daily circulation of 101,000, was larger than any of the seven newspapers that linked to *e-the-People* in this study.

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Table 1

Sampled newspaper online sites, by stratum

A

Miami Herald
Detroit News
USA Today
New York Times
Cleveland Plain Dealer
New York Daily News
Newark Star Ledger
Arizona Republic
Houston Chronicle
San Diego Union
Washington Post

B

Oregonian (Portland)
New Orleans Time Picayune
Orlando Sentinel
St. Paul Pioneer Press
Rochester Democrat & Chronicle
Des Moines Register
Charlotte Observer
Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City)
Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville)
Press-Enterprise (Riverside, CA)
Louisville Courier Journal
Journal News (White Plains, NY)

C

Knoxville News-Sentinel*
Times Union (Albany, NY)
Union-News (Springfield, MA)
Tribune-Review (Greensburg, PA)
Augusta Chronicle
Staten Island Advance
Courier (Houma, LA)
Amarillo Globe Times
Gainesville Sun
Star-Banner (Ocala, FL)
Muskegon Chronicle
News-Gazette (Champaign, IL)*

D

St. Joseph News-Press
Port Huron Times Herald*
Valley Morning Star (Harlingen, TX)
Ottumwa Courier*
Big Spring Herald*
Waynesboro Record Herald*
Free Press (Kinston, NC)
West Side Sun News
Fairfield Daily Republic*
Marshall News Messenger
Homer News
Today's Sunbeam (Salem,NJ)

* Links to *e-the-People*

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Table 2
Frequencies of Structural Features in Newspaper Web Sites

Structural Features	Percent
Direct link on homepage to discussion board	76
Included purpose statement or objective of discussion board	38
Required users to register to read discussion board postings	4
Required users to register to post on the discussion boards	87
Allowed users to post anonymously/ pseudonymously	100
Included a link or information about rules for participating on boards	75
Discussion board posted explicit consequences for users who didn't follow rules	55
Users could register a complaint about another user on the discussion board	45
Users could evaluate other users' posts on the discussion board	23
Newspapers included a link or information about users' privacy with respect to using the discussion boards	32
Newspaper would notify users by e-mail if someone had responded to their post	6
Discussion boards included instructions on how to participate	55
Discussion boards included an FAQ section	45
Users could create a public profile	81
Discussion boards included parameters for joining the discussion	51
Of the discussion boards that had parameters for joining, age identification was a requirement	96
Discussion board threads were archived	85
Free discussion boards	100
Users could post new threads on the discussion boards	87

Table 3

Most Common Characteristics of Newspapers'

Online Discussion Boards:

1. Users are allowed to post anonymous/pseudonymously
2. Discussion boards are free to use
3. Users can post new threads on the discussion boards
4. Users are required to register before posting to the discussion board
5. Discuss board threads were archived

Least Common Characteristics of Newspapers' Online Discussion Boards:

1. Newspapers required users to register to read the discussion boards
2. Newspapers would notify users by e-mail if someone had responded to their post
3. Users could evaluate other users' posts on the discussion board
4. Newspapers included a link or information about users' privacy with respect to using the discussion boards

Table 4

Difference in Mean Scores on Structural Variables

	Mean	S.D.	N
e-the-People	11.57	.53	7
All Other Sites	10.20	3.71	40

(t = -2.21; p = .032; df = 45)

"Searching for a New Paradigm: Results of the National Media Writing Faculty Survey"

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"Searching for a New Paradigm: Results of the National Media Writing Faculty Survey"

Introduction

Like their counterparts in English departments nationwide, U.S. journalism scholars have long sought to establish a body of knowledge specific to the teaching of writing in journalism. Such research arguably begins with identifying contemporary attitudes and practices of journalism and media writing faculty in the United States. This inquiry includes an examination of the prevalence of traditional or *writing as product* teaching, where the instructor serves primarily as an editor, compared with the use of progressive pedagogy or *writing as process*, where the instructor serves more as a coach with his or her students.

Innovative educators approach journalistic writing as a blend of product and process approaches, combining creative thinking strategies to bolster performance with strict language skills instruction and emphasis on proper mechanics. In these classrooms, instruction unites craft and creativity in the teaching of journalistic/media writing. In these classrooms, students learn to think as writers and gain confidence in their creativity, while recognizing and employing the principles and techniques required by their professional craft.

Elbow (1983) discussed the two conflicting mentalities needed for good teaching, which stem from the two conflicting obligations inherent in the job—an obligation to nurture creativity in students and an obligation to knowledge and society (e.g., upholding professional standards).

The challenge for journalism educators is to integrate the best of writing as product and process in their instruction. The challenge for journalism researchers is to determine where these approaches are being successfully implemented. That search for a new, more integrated paradigm in the teaching of media writing was the rationale for a comprehensive national study conducted by the researchers in spring 2002.

This comprehensive survey of journalism educator attitudes toward the teaching of writing was commissioned as part of a three-year grant to Ball State University's Department of Journalism by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Literature Review: English Composition Studies

For decades, research on the teaching of writing was largely the domain of English departments. In the 1970s and 1980s such research focused on the practices of composition students. Emig (1971) used protocol analysis to study the composing process of a group of 12th-graders and discovered that their writing was recursive not linear. They developed their ideas intuitively not methodically, and proceeded through a writing assignment by moving back and forth between various stages (e.g., planning, writing, revising) of the writing process. Murray (1972, 1978) challenged conventional wisdom, suggesting that educators needed to initiate students into the process of discovery through language. He reported that internal revision, in which the writer "discovers" content, form and voice was far more extensive and important than external revision, which includes proofreading and copy editing a story.

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Flower and Hayes (1981) formulated a cognitive theory of writing that centered on the set of thinking processes a writer organized while composing. A related discovery was that writers changed their primary goals and created new goals (thus shaping and reshaping story content) based on what they learned by writing.

For years, composition scholars debated the merits of competing approaches, such as product versus process or craft versus creativity. D'Eloia (1977) discussed the "uses and limits of grammar" in teaching writing. Pianko (1979) recommended that teachers focus on process not product. Friedman (1983) criticized teaching methods that were error-based (i.e., that attempted to remedy grammatical or mechanical problems by showing how not to write). Graves (1980) described the shift in writing research to concern with process (versus product). Yet Greenberg (1982) urged composition teachers to become involved in creating tests to measure minimum writing ability. Where Moran (1984) called for teachers to serve as in-process editors, Murray (1981) claimed that teachers should not interpret students' drafts but allow students to work toward their own meaning. Similarly, Spear (1983) wrote that writing instruction was more beneficial if it rested upon theories of sequential cognitive development to better address needs of students. In exploring the role of writing centers on campus, North (1984) stated that misunderstandings about these centers reveal an emphasis on product (e.g., fix-it shops) rather than on process (e.g., nurturing student-centered writing).

During the 1980s, a growing number of theorists began a search for a more integrated paradigm in the teaching of writing. The emphasis was on exploring how opposite mentalities or processes could complement rather than interfere with each other—such as writing assignments that began with exploratory invention and ended with critical revising (Elbow, 1983). While Hairston (1982) implored educators to do the "hard thing" by examining the intangible process of student writing, she noted that it was important to preserve the best parts of earlier methods for teaching writing: the concern for style and the preservation of high standards for the written product.

Literature Review: Journalism Research

Throughout much of the 20th century, the traditional model in journalism writing texts focused on an objective reality of newsworthiness as distinguished by such traits as prominence, proximity, timeliness, consequence and conflict. Conn (1968) examined the role of these "news values" and other reporting techniques in shaping how journalists write their stories. Pitts (1982) used verbal protocols (i.e., tape recordings of subjects' thoughts on writing) to describe the stages of the news writing processes of professional reporters. In 1987 (Ieron) replicated Pitts' 1982 study using student journalists. The research revealed distinct differences between how professional and student journalists approached the writing of stories.

Media stories were assumed to be conceived and written in a linear, methodical fashion, emphasizing story forms (e.g., inverted pyramid) and formats (e.g., speech stories, meeting coverage) (Zurek, 1986). Advocates of the traditional, product-oriented approach to news writing focused on the accuracy, organization and grammatical correctness of the finished product as measured against a pre-established model (White, 1989).

But a number of researchers such as Zurek (1986), Olson (1987) and Pitts (1989) urged fellow journalism educators to challenge conventional approaches and investigate composition literature that could enable journalism educators to see more clearly the most

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effective teaching and evaluation strategies for writing instruction. Journalism writing instructors were encouraged to adopt new methodologies that increased interaction between teachers and students during the writing process, and focused more attention on lead writing and editing for revision (Pitts, 1989). Streckfuss (1991) utilized aspects of writing process theory, with its emphasis on stages of revision to improve writing. Similarly, Schierhorn & Endres (1992) discussed the role of instructors who coached writers through the entire prewriting, writing and rewriting process rather than merely critiquing and grading the final product.

A decade later, Wiltse (2002) wrote that it would benefit instructors to understand the how students use instructors' comments to revise their news stories. He noted how instructor feedback could have a powerful effect on students' self-efficacy beliefs and their performance as writers. Massé and Popovich (2002) conducted a pilot study of introductory media writing students at a Midwestern university during a summer term to determine if student attitudes toward writing changed from the beginning of a course until its conclusion. Q Methodology was used to replicate studies of writing apprehension conducted by Riffe and Stacks in 1988 and 1992. By providing a personalized (subjective) measure of attitudes, Q Methodology enabled researchers to conduct an individual assessment of writing apprehension as opposed to analyzing group norms, as in previous research on the phenomenon of writing apprehension.

Subsequently, Massé and Popovich replicated the same study with an expanded population of students at the same Midwestern university. Statements were given to 127 beginning journalism students who were taking their first college journalism writing class during a 16-week fall term. The students represented seven department sequences. From the 127 Q sorts, a random sample of 40 respondents was selected–20 men, 20 women. Further analysis of these results is underway.

Student attitudes toward their craft are considered significant predictors of writing ability (Humphrey 1982). Massé (1999) conducted a qualitative pilot research study using student journals as a formative (classroom) assessment technique. The objective of the research was to enhance understanding of media students' attitudes toward writing processes. The data revealed information about the mindset of students in a media writing classroom that could be used by instructors to shape their pedagogical methods.

Journalism education has long been dominated by the traditionalists who stress the mechanics and fundamentals of writing, concentrating on the quality of the finished written *product* that students generate. These educators define themselves largely as editors. They favor a teacher-centered (based) classroom, where lectures are regularly given, and where papers receive detailed critiques and severe penalties for grammatical errors.

However, since the late 1980s, journalism faculty have emerged who view writing more as a student-centered cognitive *process*. These educators act as coaches who guide student-writers, helping them to select topics, solve problems, generate ideas, and plan, shape and revise their writings (Walvoord, 1990). They also tend to assign more ungraded, informal writing exercises, organize peer editing teams in the classroom, and schedule student conferences regularly throughout the term. Zurek (1986) says that these instructors "pay attention to all aspects of the writing process: discovering what the writer wishes to write about, gathering information, making meaning, ordering ideas, revising, editing."

In 1998 Massé and Popovich conducted a Q methodology study to assess faculty attitudes toward the teaching of writing at a Midwestern university. The study focused on determining how faculty viewed their mission of teaching writing across communication disciplines. By quantifying the expressed attitudes of a department's writing faculty, a Q methodology study was an effective first step toward assisting the journalism unit in creating a more unified approach to enhance the teaching of writing. The study also revealed that all faculty used some combination of both coaching (writing as process) and editing (writing as product) approaches in the writing classroom. There were slightly more faculty (56 to 44 percent) who labeled themselves as being more of a coach than an editor in the teaching of writing.

In the search for a new paradigm in the teaching of writing, a basic question remains: Which teaching style will contribute to improving undergraduate writing skills across communication disciplines? Journalism educators and communication professionals are now suggesting a balance between craft and creativity, a flexible strategy that nurtures the cognitive process while ensuring the quality of the final written product. This integrated approach to the teaching of writing is intended to provide students with opportunities to see the connections among mechanical, expressive and journalistic writing abilities as they work to enhance their skills in those areas (Ward and Seifert, 1990). Such connections are encouraged by editors as well as educators, demonstrating the belief that to improve the teaching of writing is not a matter of finding the right method. Rather, it is a process of balancing the requirements and rewards of competing styles (e.g., product and process). The pursuit of an integrated instruction model in the journalism writing classroom also reflects an acceptance of theories of information processing and cognitive development, which demonstrate the highly individualized nature of all learning—such as how students interact with particular tasks (Siegler, 1983) and progress at varying rates Spear (1983).

Objectives

The initial objective of this national media writing faculty survey was to compile a contemporary profile of the typical U.S. journalism educator. This profile includes demographic data and information on pedagogical attitudes, practices and resources. A second, related objective was to search for a new, more integrated paradigm in the teaching of media writing—where instruction blends both product and process techniques, enabling students to gain confidence and proficiency in their craft.

Researchers were particularly interested in examining educators' self-rankings on teaching style (i.e., product- versus process-orientation). To better understand teaching approaches, respondents were asked to detail common pedagogical techniques for addressing student-writing problems. Related questions dealt with types of writing assignments typically assigned to students in introductory and advanced writing classes.

Research Questions:

1) Who is the typical media writing teacher in U.S. journalism/communication programs, and what are the typical teaching practices of that media writing teacher?

2) Can we determine which writing teachers consider themselves to be more traditional (i.e., editors) or progressive (i.e., coaches), and are there resultant differences in their teaching styles and practices?

Methodology

To answer the research questions posed by the study investigators, a telephone and Web site survey was conducted of all the media writing teachers who could be identified at the 425 journalism and mass communications schools listed in the 2002 membership directory of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. An independent research (polling) firm in Indianapolis, Indiana, was employed to conduct the study, and it called all of the schools in the AEJMC directory during the March and April 2002, test period. The firm identified 1287 faculty who were teaching media writing courses. Media writing faculty were given the option of participating in a 10-page telephone survey or responding to the survey by email. The survey firm made a maximum of 12 calls to each individual to solicit responses to the survey.

A total of 512 individuals (40%) responded to at least some of the questions, but 376 individuals (29%) representing 240 institutions (56%) provided complete and usable survey data. Because of the partial responses to certain survey questions, N values differ in the findings, and some questions have more than a total of 376 responses. Two-thirds of those responding did so by Web site, and the other third responded to a 20-minute telephone survey. Of the responding individuals, 209 (56%) taught at an ACEJMC accredited institution, and 167 (44%) taught at a non-accredited institution. Sixty-three percent of the respondents were male, and 37% were female.

Using the SPSS statistical package for the PC, investigators cross-tabbed data in three ways. They broke out comparisons to all of the survey questions by accredited versus non-accredited schools, by gender, and by editor versus coach identification, using a self-rating continuum (Survey Question 13). The editor-coach continuum was a 10-point bi-polar scale with 1 = editor, and 10 = coach. Those respondents (185) who rated themselves from 1-5 were considered to be editors (mean = 4.21), and those respondents (188) who rated themselves from 6-10 were considered to be coaches (mean = 7.73). Chi-square tests of fit were used where appropriate, and independent sample t-tests were used to test means.

Findings

Although a major focus of this paper is to assess to what extent current journalism educators have integrated product (editor) versus process (coach) writing techniques into their instructional activities, the investigators begin here with a profile of the contemporary media writing teacher in U.S. journalism/communication programs to provide baseline information about teaching styles and practices. After the profile is presented, the investigators provide an analysis of the editor versus coach methodologies of teaching media writing, and discuss to what extent both methodologies are operational in media writing courses.

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Profile of Media Writing Teacher

The typical media writing teacher working at a U.S. journalism and mass communication program who participated in this study was male (63.0%), approximately 50 years (49.74) old, and held a doctorate (46.7%) or a master's degree (42.4%). The average media writing teacher in this study taught at an ACEJMC accredited school or department (55.6%). This representative media writing teacher had been a college-level instructor on a full-time and part-time basis for 14.4 years, and he had worked at his present institution for 9.5 years. He had 13.5 years of professional media writing experience. He was either tenured (38.3%) or on the tenure-track (20.6%), and he had a professorial rank (67.8%). He was conducting research/creative activity (63.8%), and he was involved in service activities (71.8%).

The typical media writing teacher taught approximately five media classes each year. Two were introductory classes, and three were advanced-level classes. Four of these classes were specific media writing classes, and generally these classes were in the news-editorial area (79.8%). On average, the media writing teacher reported that his students completed 16 graded writing assignments in his introductory classes, and 13 graded writing assignments in his upper-level classes. This media writing teacher thought that the ideal number of students for introductory media class should be approximately 17 (M=16.65), and 15 (M=15.04) in advanced classes.

In his introductory classes, the media writing teacher's top five teaching activities (1=low; 5=high amount of attention) were: lead writing (M=4.02), grammar and AP style (M=3.83), story structure (M=3.78), revising stories (M=3.67), and sentence structure (M=3.61). With the possible exception of story revising (i.e., allowing rewrite options) all of these were traditional writing-as-product-type activities, common for an editor versus coach orientation. By contrast, writing-as-process-type activities, common to a teacher-as-coach orientation, scored much lower: peer editing (M=2.85), prewriting (brainstorming, mapping) activities (M=2.79) and out-of-class workshops (M=2.73). (See Appendix 1)

Although the survey results on media writing teaching activities indicated a preference for more traditional (i.e., editor) teaching practices, the average media writing teacher in this study said that he felt more comfortable being a coach rather than an editor in class (M=3.53). He also indicated that he would define his role more as a coach rather than as an editor (M=5.98), S.D.=2.14).* The research continued to reveal a consistent, paradoxical pattern of respondents identifying themselves as being more progressive (i.e., coach) in attitude, while demonstrating more traditional (i.e., editor) teaching behavior. Further, the typical media writing teacher philosophically aligned himself more as a traditional journalist, rather than as a civic journalist (M=4.91, S.D.=2.44).*

The typical media writing teacher felt most comfortable teaching news writing skills (M=4.65); having individual conferences with writing students (M=4.62); and teaching grammar/language skills (M=4.27). In introductory classes, the media writing teacher most typically assigned three kinds of hard news stories: speech coverage (56.9%), accident/crime story (55.1%) and meeting coverage (53.5%). In introductory classes, the media writing teacher most typically assigned a personality profile (62.5%) as a feature writing assignment. The most popular "other assignment" given by the media writing teacher was a news release (43.1%). In advanced classes, the media writing teacher most typically assigned the issue-oriented story (67.6%) for hard news; the most

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common feature writing assignments were the personality profile (68.6%) and an issue-oriented story (61.2%). (See Appendix 2 and 3)

Convergence-type news writing courses were offered at less than the majority of schools (48.1%) where this "average" media writing teacher was employed, and 44.1% of the schools were planning to offer such a course in the near future.

Only 24.7% of respondents' programs currently require a standardized grammar and language skills test from students. But 70.5% of respondents felt that journalism programs should require a standardized grammar and language skills test. Only 20.8% of respondents' programs currently offer a grammar course for journalism/communication students; while another 33% believe a grammar course should be offered. Forty-six percent (46.3%) of respondents did not support a grammar class for journalism/ communication students because their units either did not have the resources (24.5%), or they thought enough grammar was already being taught in writing classes (21.8%).

Sixty-five (65.4%) percent of respondents believed, however, that journalism programs should require students to pass a writing competency exam before they graduate. Ninety-two percent (92.2%) thought that all introductory students should earn a minimum passing grade in order to advance in the program. Sixty-nine percent (69.1%) of respondents' programs currently have a minimum grade requirement.

When it came to dealing with student writing problems, the typical media writing teacher preferred traditional product-oriented approaches, such as giving detailed critiques and editing of assignments (91.2%) and providing more editing/proofreading skills assignments (65.7%). However, more progressive process-oriented approaches were also recommended by respondents: allowing students more rewrite options on assignments (65.3%); introducing more coaching techniques in/out of the classroom (55.3%); and encouraging peer review/editing exercises (55.1%).

Regarding, use of supplemental resources, the typical media writing teacher referred "weaker" students to the university's writing/learning center (64.1%). This result was supported by the fact that 89.4% of schools in this study have a college or university maintained writing center. Only 19.1% of the units in this study maintained their own writing center to provide tutoring to students. These peer-tutoring centers were staffed mostly by a combination of undergrads and graduate students (24.7%), but the typical writing teacher did not rate the effectiveness of the writing center very high. He rated as average the value of the peer tutoring writing center (M=2.96); and he rated the effectiveness of the tutoring center in improving student writing even lower (M=2.81). Only 16.2% of the respondents surveyed stated that their program offered an interactive Web site/on-line writing lab to assist their students with writing instruction.

Editors versus Coaches

In the course of responding to the media writing survey, faculty were asked to define their role as a writing instructor by rating themselves on a continuum from 1 to 10, with 1 representing their role as an editor, and 10 representing their role as a coach. Those faculty (194) who rated themselves as "editors " (49.6%) posted a mean score of 4.21. Those faculty (196) who rated themselves as "coaches" (50.4%) posted a mean score of 7.73. A t-test of the two means produced a significant result ($t = -29.568$, $df = 382$, $p < .000$), and the finding was an indication that two distinct views did evolve in this study concerning media writing teacher. Overall, a slightly larger number of women

(52.2%) defined themselves as coaches, and a slightly larger number of men defined themselves as editors (50.6%). No significant difference between the two genders was found, however. Overall, slightly more males (50.7) who defined themselves as editors were employed at accredited schools, while slightly more females (51.3%) who defined themselves as coaches were employed at accredited schools.

Editors reported that they were approximately 50 years old, and coaches averaged 49 years of age. Editors averaged 13.9 years of media writing experience, and coaches averaged 13.7 years. In terms of academic degrees, editors had a higher percentage of doctorates (50.3%) than master's degrees (38.4%), while coaches had earned more master's degrees (46.3%) than doctorates (43.6%). Approximately 11% of editors held bachelor degrees, while about 10% of coaches held a similar degree. More coaches (39.9%) were tenured than editors (36.8%), but more editors (24.3%) were on the tenure-track than coaches (18.6%). More than one-third of editors (36.2%) and coaches (36.7%) were on renewable contracts. Editors reported they had been teaching for about 15 years in college, both full- and part-time, and they had spent about nine years at their present institution. Coaches reported teaching in colleges for 14 years, both full and part time, and they had spent the last 10 years at their present institution.

Coaches (68.6%) held more professorial ranks than editors (67.0%), while more editors (16.8%) were instructors than coaches (14.9%). Approximately 16% of editors and coaches were considered to be either adjunct faculty or lecturers in their units. More editors (68.1%) than coaches (60.6%) reported they were involved in research/creative activities, and more coaches (72.9%) than editors (71.9%) reported more involvement in service activities. Approximately 12% of editors reported no involvement in research or service, and about 18% of coaches reported no involvement.

Generally, editors said they taught 5.6 media classes during the year; 2.2 of them were introductory classes, and 3.3 were advanced classes. Coaches reported teaching 5.3 classes per year; 1.9 of them were introductory writing classes, and 3.6 were advanced writing classes. Editors said they assigned an average of 17 graded assignments in introductory writing courses, and 13 in advanced writing classes. Coaches said they assigned 15 graded assignments in introductory courses, and 13 in advanced writing classes.

From a list of 18 teaching activities (Appendix 1), editors said they gave the most attention in their classes to: lead writing ($M = 3.99$); grammar and AP style ($M = 3.95$); story structure ($M = 3.77$); sentence structure ($M = 3.66$); and revising stories ($M = 3.59$). Coaches chose the same five activities but in a slightly different order: lead writing ($M = 4.06$); story structure ($M = 3.82$); revising stories ($M = 3.78$); grammar and AP style ($M = 3.76$); and sentence structure ($M = 3.59$). Only one activity from the list, prewriting activities (e.g., brainstorming, mapping), provided a significant difference ($t = -2.753$, $df = 173$, $p < .007$) between editors ($M = 2.54$) and coaches ($M = 3.03$). Prewriting activities were ranked last by editors. Coaches ranked this writing-as-process technique 13th out of 18 on their list of activities. Investigators found it surprising that more teaching of writing activity differences did not exist between editors and coaches.

Even more surprising was the ranking of those list activities by the media writing faculty defining themselves as coaches. Embedded in the list of 18 activities, were six teaching activities that writing-as-process proponents had recommended. Those six included: prewriting activities, use of non-graded drafts, revising, peer editing, student conferences, and out-of-class workshops. Only story revising ranked in the coaches' top five list of activities. The others were ranked at the lower end of the scale for writing activities.

TABLE 1: Which of the following, if any, pedagogical techniques do you use when addressing student writing problems? (In percentages)

Techniques	**All Schools (N=376)**	**Editors (N=194)**	**Coaches (N=196)**
Assign remedial writing exercises or tutorials (n = 139)	37.0%	37.3%	39.4%
Promote journal writing (n = 54)	14.4	14.1	16.0
Use department-wide rating scale to penalize writing errors (n = 73)	19.4	23.2	16.5
Provide detailed critiques/edits on assignments (n = 343)	91.2	96.2	92.6
Provide prewriting exercises (n = 192)	51.1	50.3	53.7
Introduce more lectures on writing-related topics (n = 234)	62.2	66.5	61.7
Provide more editing/proofreading skills assignments (n = 247)	65.7	68.6	67.6
Assign more ungraded writing assignments (n = 170)	45.2	45.9	46.8
Encourage peer reviewing/editing exercises (n = 196)	52.1	53.0	54.3
Allow students more rewrite options on their work (n = 245)	65.3	64.9	70.7
Hold regularly scheduled conferences with all students (n = 180)	47.9	49.2	48.9
Introduce more writing coach techniques in/out of the classroom (n = 208)	55.3	51.4	61.7
Reinforce the role of instructor as the final editor (n = 186)	49.5	56.8	44.7
Assign/refer students to a writing center, Web site, or other source (n = 182)	48.4	49.7	49.5
Other techniques (n = 43)	11.4	15.1	8.0

(NOTE: "N" totals vary due to some survey questions having more than 376 respondents.)

In terms of introductory and advance writing class assignments, general agreement was evident between editors and coaches. The most popular introductory hard news writing assignment was a speech story for editors (64.9%), while coaches used an accident/crime story assignment (58%). The personality profile was the most popular assignment for a feature writing exercise for editors (64.9%) and coaches (66.5%). News releases served as most popular "other assignment" for editors (43.2%) and coaches (45.2%).

In advanced writing classes, issue-oriented stories were the most popular for editors (73.5%) and coaches (66.5%). Personality profiles were the most popular feature writing assignments for editors (71.4%) and coaches (70.7%). Both editors (29.2%) and

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coaches (29.8%) chose a persuasive writing assignment as their favorite "other" writing assignment in advanced classes.

Some differences in pedagogical techniques were detected between editors and coaches when they addressed student writing problems (See Table 1). Both editors (96.2%) and coaches (92.6%) provided detailed critiques and editing on writing assignments. Editors, however, chose next to provide more editing/proofreading skills assignments (68.6%); gave more lectures on writing-related topics (66.5%); allowed more rewrite options on student work (64.9%), and encouraged peer reviewing /editing exercises (53%). Coaches, after providing detailed critiques, allowed more rewrite options (70.7%); provided more editing, proofreading skills assignments (67.6%); gave more lectures on writing-related topics (61.7%); and introduced more writing coach techniques in/out of the classroom (61.7%). Overwhelmingly, editors (69.2%) and coaches (62.8%) chose to refer their students to their university writing/learning center who needed help with language/grammar skills.

TABLE 2: Indicate your feelings about the following statements: (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statements	**All Schools (N=376)**	**Editors (N=194)**	**Coaches (N=196)**
I feel comfortable teaching news writing skills.	4.65	4.68	4.62
I feel comfortable teaching grammar/language skills.	4.27	4.29	4.25
I feel comfortable teaching public relations writing skills.	3.22	3.15	3.30
I feel comfortable teaching advertising writing skills.	2.53	2.46	2.59
I feel comfortable teaching broadcast writing skills.	3.10	2.28	3.31*
I feel comfortable teaching online writing skills.	3.03	2.94	3.13
I feel comfortable having individual conferences with writing students.	4.62	4.53	4.72*
I feel comfortable with peer editing exercises.	3.40	3.25	3.56*
I feel more comfortable being an editor than a coach in class.	2.91	3.33*	2.52
I feel more comfortable being a coach than an editor in class.	3.53	3.03	4.04*

NOTE: "N" totals vary due to some survey questions having more than 376 respondents.)
* Denotes significant differences between editors and coaches.

Investigators asked editors and coaches to assess their feelings on a number of statements dealing with teaching subjects and activities (See Table 2). Editors ranked

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their comfort with teaching news writing skills highest (M = 4.68); then came their comfort with individual student conferences (M = 4.53); their comfort with teaching grammar/language skills (M = 4.29); their comfort with being an editor rather than a coach in class (M = 3.33); and their comfort with peer editing exercises (M = 3.25). Their ratings on individual student conference and peer editing exercises were significantly lower than the ratings provided by coaches. Their ratings on being an editor in the classroom were significantly greater than the rating provided by the coaches.

Coaches rated highest their comfort with individual students conferences (M = 4.72); then came their comfort with teaching news writing skills (M = 4.62); teaching grammar/language skills (M = 4.25); being a coach in class (M = 4.04); and teaching broadcast writing skills (M = 3.31). Coaches' ratings concerning individual student conferences, being a coach in class, and teaching broadcast writing skills were significantly higher than ratings posted by editors on the same statements. Overall, this battery of statements may give some indication of whether media writing teachers will be able to cope with the pedagogical demands of convergence (print, broadcast, online) and persuasive (advertising, public relations) writing courses. The results here suggest that editors and coaches are comfortable with teaching traditional subjects such as news writing and grammar, and having conference with students. But if they are faced with teaching advertising, broadcast or public relations writing, they are not as comfortable facing those challenges. Only coaches exhibited a moderate level of comfort with teaching broadcast writing, and their reaction to the statement was significantly different from that of editors who expressed below-average comfort.

Finally, editors and coaches were asked to indicate what philosophical values they were passing on to their students by rating themselves on a 10-point continuum, where 1 = traditional journalist, and 10 = civic journalist. Editors posted a 4.47 mean on the scale, which meant they leaned toward the traditional journalist philosophy. Coaches posted a mean of 5.34 on the scale, which suggested an inclination toward the civic journalist model. This difference was significant ($t = -3.499$, $df = 374$, $p < .001$). However, the overall mean for the entire group of media writing teachers on the traditional versus civic journalist continuum was 4.91. The median and the mode for the entire group were 5.0, and the SD was 2.44. Although it might be a streamlined solution to classify editors as traditional journalists and coaches as civic journalists, the research findings would suggest that the attitudes of media teachers in this study lay somewhere between traditional and civic journalists, philosophically. Because of the discussion surrounding the inclusion of the civic journalism notion into professional practice, it might be said of media writing teachers that they were more inclined to be noncommittal about the philosophical dichotomy.

Discussion

Since the late 1980s, a small group of journalism educators have urged their colleagues to incorporate specific, progressive pedagogical techniques into their teaching of writing to enhance instructional interaction and to enable students to gain more confidence and proficiency in their craft. As of 2002, research indicates that today's media writing teachers across the United States still largely cling to the traditional media writing techniques and models that have long served academia and the industry.

The attitudes of journalism educators toward embracing progressive techniques (e.g., writing as process) do indicate a shift to more of a coaching style in the writing classroom. However, their behavior (teaching practices) lags behind their inclinations. As this research study has revealed, "coaches " are not significantly different as teachers of writing from "editors." Media writing teachers tend to label themselves almost evenly along philosophical lines into groups called "editors" and "coaches." But the behavioral differences are minimal, as the reluctance to abandon traditional writing approaches remains significant. For example, when media writing teachers were asked to express their feelings about various teaching activities, editors and coaches provided the following information:

- Both editors and coaches are most comfortable teaching news writing skills, but rate their comfort below average in teaching public relations, advertising, broadcast, and on-line writing skills.
- Both editors and coaches feel most comfortable teaching grammar/language skills, and having conferences with writing students. They are less comfortable with peer editing exercises.
- Coaches are significantly more comfortable than editors teaching broadcast writing skills, and organizing peer editing exercises.

Further, there does not appear to be evidence of emerging instructional innovation on the part of media writing teachers to provide students with resources, remediation and training that extends beyond the classroom.

Specific research findings from the national media writing faculty survey indicate that a new, more integrated paradigm in the teaching of writing will likely emerge as educators reevaluate teaching styles and adopt complementary practices to enhance both the writing process and the finished product.

Findings include:

- 96% of editors prefer detailed critiques/editing on assignments, while 93% of coaches prefer the same approach. (Product approach)
- 69% of editors prefer more editing/proofreading assignments, and 68% of coaches prefer the same. (Product approach)
- 67% of editors prefer more lectures on writing-related topics, while coaches prefer them 62% of the time. (Product approach)
- 65% of editors allow student rewrite options on their writing, and coaches allow them 71% of the time. (Process approach)
- 53% of editors encourage peer review/editing exercises, while 54% of coaches do the same. (Process approach)
- 62% of coaches introduce more writing coach techniques in/out of the classroom, and 51% of editors do the same. (Process approach)
- 50% of editors provide students with prewriting exercises, and 54% of coaches provide such exercises. (Process approach).
- Less than half of editors and coaches hold regularly scheduled conferences with writing students, or assign more ungraded writing assignments. Both techniques are considered to be **process writing** approaches.

These and related findings about teaching styles and the ability to embrace change have immediate implications in today's educational environment. The pressure of adding media convergence courses to curricula has already become a reality in journalism and communications units across the country. According to this research study, convergence is rapidly gaining acceptance in both accredited and non-accredited institutions. Respondents reported that 48% of journalism/communication units have already created convergence classes for their curricula, and an additional 44% are planning to add such courses in the near future. These figures suggest that the growth of convergence curricula will require adaptation and innovation by today's media writing faculty. Yet, the research does not indicate that such instructional flexibility currently exists among a majority of journalism educators. This may well prove problematic as media writing teachers strive to provide their journalism and communication students with the range of writing skills and experiences required by a rapidly changing media environment.

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Implications for Future Study

The analysis of research findings from the national media writing faculty survey is a significant and ongoing undertaking. The researchers are evaluating data that will generate further inquiry into such areas as a comparison of respondents from accredited versus non-accredited institutions, a comparison of male and female writing faculty, and an assessment of student writing capabilities. The goal of this research is to continue to enrich the academic and professional body of knowledge of the teaching of writing.

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Appendix 1

Mean Scores for Teaching Activities of All Media Writing Teachers, and Editors v. Coaches (1 = Low Attention, 5 = High Attention)

Teaching Activity	**All Schools**	**Editors**	**Coaches**
News values (n = 267)	3.34	3.32	3.38
News Judgments (n = 262)	3.52	3.56	3.50
Newsgathering (n = 241)	3.47	3.39	3.58
Knowing readers (n = 246)	3.11	3.06	3.16
Grammar & AP Style (n = 272)	3.83	3.66	3.82
Sentence Structure (n = 256)	3.61	3.66	3.59
Story Structure (n = 276)	3.78	3.77	3.82
Prewriting activities (n = 168)	2.79	2.54	3.03*
News fact sheets (n = 155)	3.12	3.14	3.12
Story Models (n = 247)	3.45	3.50	3.43
Lead Writing (n = 269)	4.02	3.99	4.06
Headline Writing (n = 47)	2.91	2.89	2.86
Non-graded drafts (n = 172)	3.24	3.14	3.40
Revising (n = 230)	3.67	3.59	3.78
Peer Editing (n = 128)	2.85	2.76	2.98
Student Conferences (n = 180)	2.98	3.10	2.92
Quizzes/Exams (n = 240)	3.00	3.09	2.90
Out-of-class wkshps (n = 62)	2.73	2.70	2.72

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* ($t = -2.753$, df = 173, $p < .007$)

THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONVERGENCE:

Challenges and Change in Newspaper News Work

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONVERGENCE:
Challenges and Change in Newspaper News Work

Abstract

A growing number of newsrooms around the country are experimenting with convergence, a sharing of news staffs, technologies, products and geography among the previously distinct provinces of print, television and online media. The demands of electronic media challenge many long-standing norms and routines of newspaper news work. This paper, based on case studies of four converged newsrooms, draws on qualitative and quantitative data to examine those sociological shifts and print journalists' reactions to the changes.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONVERGENCE:
Challenges and Change in Newspaper News Work

In Tampa, Florida, a *Tribune* business reporter stands in front of a television camera, patiently waiting to tape her weekly segment for the NBC affiliate. Down the road in Sarasota, the *Herald-Tribune*'s outdoors writer huddles with the local cable channel's sports anchor, cameraman, and producer to hash out details of an hour-long interview program to be cablecast live from the annual boat show the coming weekend. In Dallas, the first reporter in the *Morning News* newsroom updates the Web site, works on stories for the next day's paper and alerts the ABC affiliate of major breaking news. In Lawrence, Kansas, *Journal-World* reporters team up with cable news reporters on election night to conduct live television interviews with winners and losers in the city primary.

In a growing number of newsrooms around the country, print journalists are being asked to provide everything from news tips to story packages for the online and television outlets affiliated with their parent company. The trend, termed "convergence," is the subject of intense interest in the media industry. Broadly defined, newsroom convergence refers to some combination of news staffs, technologies, products and geography among the previously distinct provinces of print, television and online media. Processes and products vary widely among the dozens of media outlets exploring the concept, but all involve a markedly novel way for newspaper journalists to "make news."

This paper uses a sociology of news work framework to explore the challenges faced by newspaper journalists in converged organizations. It is based on case studies in four converged newsrooms and interviews with 120 journalists -- including 64 newspaper journalists -- during January and February 2003, along with their responses to a questionnaire probing attitudes about convergence. The sociological perspective suggests that significant accommodation in newsroom norms, routines and structures are being asked of newspaper journalists as their job expands to incorporate other media forms.

ABOUT CONVERGENCE

Considerable scholarly attention has focused on media corporatization as mergers and acquisitions, facilitated by deregulatory policies and relaxation of rules limiting cross-ownership (Ahrens, 2003), enable the big to get bigger still. Consolidation raises concerns about concentration of economic, cultural, and political power in the hands of a steadily decreasing number of media giants (Bagdikian, 2000; Compaine & Gomery, 2000; McChesney, 1999).

Newsroom convergence stems in significant measure from this trend toward corporate convergence. Within the newsroom, however, the term "convergence" has taken on a more narrowly focused connotation. It refers to the changing ways in which journalists are being asked to handle the products and practices of their working lives, particularly the emphasis on cooperation among print, broadcast or cable, and online journalists to tell a story to as many audience members as possible through a variety of delivery systems (Castaneda, 2003).

In this context, convergence is starting to attract scholarly interest, though little published work has appeared yet. But the trade press is full of status reports, many suggesting sociological challenges. "Cultural resistance is the biggest hurdle," the *Tampa Tribune*'s executive editor says (Thelen, 2002: 16). "For multimedia work to take deep root, journalists from once-competing newsrooms must learn to cooperate and collaborate -- a tall order in our highly individualistic professional mystique." The nature of content that converged journalists are expected to produce, along with its quality and quantity, also are key concerns "While some multimedia journalists can handle a variety of tasks efficiently and professionally, most will deliver mediocre journalism," writes one observer (Stone, 2002). "Quality comes from those journalists who practice a defined job, be it writer, videographer, photographer, or editor." Staffing, training, and compensation for additional efforts that convergence requires also are issues (Outing, 2002; Stevens, 2002).

This exploratory study builds on such anecdotal material, particularly in the use of trade press reports to guide construction of questionnaire items. However, it seeks to examine the topic from a broader perspective. The purpose is neither to track the progress of convergence nor to merely outline its virtues or vices. Rather, it is to view the ongoing implementation of convergence through a sociological frame, in an effort to understand what is happening in today's newspaper newsrooms in the context of the way news work has traditionally been done and the different -- or additional -- ways newspaper journalists are being asked to do it.

SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS WORK

The study of the sociology of news work has one of the longest traditions in mass communications research. As far back as the 1950s, researchers explored socialization processes within the newsroom, discovering the importance of peers in transmitting norms and the value placed by journalists on production of a certain quantity of something called "news" (Breed, 1955). A generation later, Tuchman and other media sociologists added fresh insights into this process of "making news." They emphasized that news itself was a social construction, a product of active negotiation with cultural resources and professional norms to create a shared understanding of how news work is to be done (Tuchman, 1978). Among the key ideas contained in this work are:

* The conception of news as bounded by the dictates of time and space, creating a "news net" that emphasizes the stories that can be most easily accommodated within newsroom routines and structures. For instance, space constraints have led to the organization of reporters by beats, or organizational specialization, and by topic areas such as sports or business. News "typifications" allow news workers to deal with a glut of occurrences in a limited amount of time; to control their work, reporters use such classification schemes to manage the claims of potential occurrences on the time available in their work day (Tuchman, 1978).

Expanding on this work, Berkowitz (1992) pointed out that routines and typifications can guide reporters' approaches even to extraordinary stories. Barnhurst and Mutz (1997) have suggested that to qualify as news, events now must somehow fit into a larger body of interpretations and themes. They see a decline in event-centered reporting as a result of changes in the culture of news that include increased education among journalists, their status as practitioners, and their ideas of both audience and evidence. Another recent application of the concept of news typifications suggests editors base their decisions about newsworthiness less on traditional definitions than on predictions of how readers from various audiences will react to a story (Sumpter, 2000).

• Issues of professionalism, a broad sociological construct that incorporates notions of expertise, ethics, public service, and autonomy (Larson, 1977). As applied to news workers, these and other aspects of professionalism are closely related to the underlying beliefs and values that journalists regard as constituting newsroom culture. As in other organizations, culture is a system of meaning created and maintained by its members; in newsrooms, tensions are likely to arise when professional norms are seen as compromised by business or entertainment values (Bantz, 1985).

Another aspect of professionalism involves the knowledge, use, and sharing of sources. Many journalists tend to "preserve their professional autonomy by jealously protecting their private sources and specialties from others' encroachment" (Tuchman, 1978: 78). Berkowitz and TerKeurst (1999) explored the dynamics of source-reporter relationships, viewing journalists and sources as components of an interpretive community within the larger social context of the news environment.

Notions of competition also come into play, and a number of studies have examined the effects of competition on both journalists' perceptions and media content. For example, Coulson and Lacy (1996) found that newspaper journalists believe competition promotes higher-quality local news, as well as greater diversity of news and editorial opinion. The same researchers, along with a third colleague, added broadcast competition to the mix and looked at the impact on city hall coverage. They found that competition was related to journalists producing more stories, including some they might have missed without competition, but having less time for in-depth reports. Television competition for print journalists also seemed to mean more reporting of unimportant stories and, to a lesser degree, more sensationalized city hall news (Lacy, Coulson & St. Cyr, 1999).

* The construction of a news narrative, or the story itself. The ability to build such narratives is a professional skill for journalists, and relies on norms of neutrality, credibility, and facticity (Tuchman, 1978). News is organized by a set of literary conventions, incorporating assumptions about "what matters, what makes sense, what time and place we live in, and what range of considerations we should take seriously" (Schudson, 2003, 190). While journalists in all media use "professionalism" as a term "to describe the excellence to which they aspire" (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996, 125), just what that professionalism entails may vary among media formats. For example, professionalism in broadcast news has been manifested by shorter sound bites as television journalists have sought to provide an increasingly compact and dramatic story. In contrast, print professionalism has produced longer stories, with the still-prominent inverted pyramid style designed to produce news accounts that end with a whimper rather than a bang (Schudson, 2003).

These and other facets of the complex sociology of news work have continued to be a fruitful area of exploration in the 1990s and into the 21st century. Much recent work has focused on the effects of technology on the culture and practice of gathering, producing, and disseminating news. For example, studies of the adoption of pagination systems in the 1990s explored its incorporation in both the daily routines of editors and their acceptance of the new page production method as a job skill (Russial, 1995, 1994; Stamm, Underwood & Giffard, 1995). Research into electronic newsgathering methods, which by the end of the 1990s had become ubiquitous in U.S. newsrooms (Garrison, 2001), has explored such issues as their effect on journalists' physical presence at a news scene (Cochran, 1997). Singer (2000) described the increased emphasis on local news in online versions of traditional newspapers, suggesting that editors are re-examining their long-standing constructs of what constitutes an optimal mix of varied information for their readers.

This study examines the ongoing process of newsroom convergence through the prism of these sociological concepts. It seeks to explore how journalists are structuring their attitudes and behaviors to meet the new demands, focusing on the early effects of convergence on existing norms and routines of newspaper news work. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways does convergence challenge existing norms and routines of newspaper news work?

RQ2: In what ways does convergence mesh with existing norms and routines of newspaper news work?

RQ3: What sociological aspects of newspaper news work appear most likely to change in response to convergence?

METHODOLOGY

Four newspapers that are converged with television and online partners were chosen based on information in the trade press and from the American Press Institute, an industry leader in tracking convergence. The researcher selected media outlets of varying market sizes, ownership structures, and approaches to convergence, appropriate to a method whose fundamental question is what can be learned from a particular case (Stake, 1994). Such field research is called for when the goal is to learn about, understand, or describe a group of interacting people (Neuman, 1991). After access was negotiated with appropriate newsroom gatekeepers (Lindlof, 1995), the following newspapers were visited. Circulation figures are from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (2003).

* ***The Dallas Morning News*,** flagship of the Belo Corp. The newspaper has a weekday circulation of more than half a million copies and a Sunday circulation of nearly 800,000.
Convergence partners: WFAA-TV (ABC), TXCN (cable), dallasnews.com, wfaa.com, txcn.com

* ***The Tampa Tribune*,** part of perhaps the most widely publicized convergence efforts in the country. The *Tribune* is a 238,000 daily and 314,000 Sunday circulation newspaper owned by Media General of Richmond, VA.
Convergence partners: WFLA-TV (NBC), TBO.com

* ***The Sarasota*** **(FL)** ***Herald-Tribune***, a New York Times paper with a winter circulation of 116,000 on weekdays and more than 144,000 on Sundays; the numbers dip in the summer. It jointly owns, with cable provider Comcast, a local 24-hour cable news channel.
Convergence partners: SNN Channel 6 (cable), heraldtribune.com

* ***The Lawrence*** **(KS)** ***Journal-World***, part of the privately owned World Company, started by the current publisher's grandfather in the late 19th century. The *Journal-World* has a daily and Sunday circulation of just under 20,000.
Convergence partners: 6News Lawrence (cable), ljworld.com, lawrence.com, KUsports.com

The researcher spent a week with each of these four partner organizations during January and February 2003, observing newsroom operations, attending news meetings and talking with journalists about convergence. Conducting the research on the journalists' turf enhanced understanding and facilitated interpretation of the context in which newsroom changes are occurring (Lindlof, 1995). The non-probability sample of participants combined elements of a convenience sample, appropriate in exploratory studies such as this, and a purposive sample, which includes subjects selected on the basis of specific characteristics (Wimmer & Dominick, 2002), primarily experience with convergence. A total of 120 print, broadcast, cable, and online journalists were interviewed during these four weeks, including 64 newspaper news managers, editors, reporters, columnists, and photographers. Interview questions were open-ended, seeking to elicit discussion of the journalist's experience with and opinions about convergence. Notes were taken by hand and later transcribed; the transcripts then were analyzed for key themes related to the research questions.

Journalists also were asked to complete a 54-item questionnaire about convergence. Social scientists stress that triangulation of methods, such as this combination of interviews and surveys, helps guard against the danger that research findings will reflect the method of inquiry in potentially misleading ways (Babbie, 2000). Diverse indicators improve measurement (Neuman, 1991). Each journalist was provided with a questionnaire immediately following his or her interview, with the exception of senior executives, whose positions of authority placed them outside the focus of this study of newsroom staffers, and one bureau reporter interviewed by phone. This approach allowed busy respondents to complete the questionnaire at their leisure, important because the interviews already took a chunk out of their workday. The questionnaire, which used a 7-point Likert scale, asked respondents to indicate agreement or disagreement with statements related to the perceived impact of convergence on careers, work routines, public service, and the profession of journalism. Room for demographic information and open-ended comments also was provided.

A total of 67 of the 110 journalists who were given questionnaires promptly completed and returned their surveys, either in person or by mail. An e-mail version of the questionnaire was sent to non-respondents in mid-March 2003 and again in late March, resulting in another 23 responses. The final survey response rate was 81.8% of all the journalists who received questionnaires; the response rate was 84.5% for newspaper journalists, 75% for television journalists, and 85.7% for online journalists. This paper focuses on the responses of the 49 newspaper journalists who completed questionnaires, along with interviews with both questionnaire respondents and non-respondents from the four papers. Mean scores for relevant questionnaire items are provided.

All journalists were promised confidentiality so that they felt comfortable speaking and completing the questionnaire freely, and no names are used here. The researcher's institution did not require human subjects board approval for these case studies of working professionals.

FINDINGS

This section considers findings from the current study in relation to key ideas in the sociology of news work literature. It seeks to highlight ways in which accepted practices of newspaper work are affected by convergence. The list is hardly exhaustive, but it represents major issues that emerged from the interviews and questionnaire responses. Table 1 provides mean responses to the questionnaire statements referenced in the text; not all respondents were active participants in newsroom convergence efforts, as discussed below.

Newsroom Routines: Time Constraints

Newspaper reporters engaged in convergence efforts consistently voiced concern about the difficulty of fitting additional duties into established routines of newsgathering and production. Used to once-a-day deadlines, journalists struggled with how to accommodate online and television products that required more frequent feeding.

Although the Web, with its constant need for fresh news, might seem the more problematic of the two, it was not. In none of these newsrooms were newspaper journalists routinely uploading directly to the Web; rather, they were expected to provide information to the online staff, which was responsible for maintaining the site. Although a few reporters voiced misgivings about passing on information before it could be thoroughly checked out, most saw as reasonable the request that they write a few paragraphs about a breaking news event -- enough to constitute an online story. It was sometimes an annoyance but rarely a significant drain on time or energy for people comfortable with slapping together sentences in the inverted-pyramid style that they saw as constituting the best structure for online news writing. "Online is a beautiful thing," said a reporter, adding that cranking out five paragraphs took only 10 minutes, and the story would be seen by an "amazing number" of people during the day. Several journalists admitted that filing updates for the Web facilitated the task of writing a longer newspaper piece, helping them focus the lead and establish a framework.

Television creates far more significant problems. Newspaper journalists have found that television's demand for visuals, discussed more below in the context of news narratives, wreaks havoc with their accustomed news-gathering and production routines. Television requires that the journalist physically travel to the location of the source or the event rather than staying in the office and working the phones or Internet. Not only does getting the video take time in and of itself, it also affects interviewing, fact-gathering, and writing time for print stories. One print reporter said he sometimes feels stretched to the point of a nervous breakdown by the resulting pressure.

Then there is the production component. While only a couple of the newspaper journalists in this study were actually editing their own tape, television still imposed time demands to which print people are not accustomed. There is the time needed to apply and then remove makeup, the time to write a script (which, unlike a Web story, requires a different writing style), the time to tape a voice-over or go live with a stand-up, and -- most frustrating of all -- the hanging-around time. "They forget that we have jobs" of our own, said one newspaper reporter who sometimes has to wait as much as half an hour to tape a segment while the television production staffers "fiddle around."

In response to an open-ended questionnaire query about the greatest challenges related to convergence, time pressures were among the most often cited by print journalists in this study. "The little things, like preparing extra content for the Web, writing scripts and taping TV spots, add up to longer days," wrote one reporter who appeared regularly on television. Another cited the challenge of "finding the time to do a story for TV or do an online version before the print version."

As these comments suggest, the time needed to produce stories for other media might be acceptable -- if the reporters and editors weren't also expected to produce their regular quota of newspaper articles. "When I'm on deadline, it's a pain in the ass," one veteran said. With the exception of one reporter whose job officially was split between the newspaper and television, all the newspaper reporters in this study still were responsible for producing basically the same amount of content for print as they had before convergence. Nor had their salaries increased to compensate them for the extra time they were spending to produce stories for another medium. "I'm like a duck," said one reporter. "I'm already paddling as fast as I can."

A number of journalists also expressed concerns about the effect that being pulled in multiple directions would have on the quality of their work. "When asked to do both video and still photographs of the same event, one of (and it's usually both) the mediums suffers greatly," one photographer wrote on his questionnaire. "Any time you try to do a million different things, chances are you don't do them all that well," an editor said. And a reporter pointed out a more subtle problem: Television duties mean he no longer has time to wander around city hall, talking to people or just seeing what's tacked up on the wall. "You never know about the lost opportunities that could make a story better," a colleague agreed.

Even though many respondents were not actually producing content for other media, questionnaire results indicate mild agreement with the statement "our decision to converge newsrooms has resulted in more work for me personally." But two questionnaire items related to the idea of journalists being spread too thin drew mild disagreement. While some journalists said in their interviews that, as one put it, "my worry is that we'll be jacks of all trades and masters of none -- I'm afraid I'm an example of it," the majority did not strongly share this fear. Nor did they agree that convergence results in "mediocre journalism."

Newsroom routines: Beats and source relations

Unlike most newspapers, few local television newsrooms are organized around a system of beats, though some broadcast reporters may be recognized as having specialties (Tuchman, 1978). Newspaper journalists in this study pointed to the lack of news beats among television journalists as a significant obstacle to seamless convergence. This was somewhat less of a problem in the metro areas, where broadcast staffs were large, experienced and stable enough for reporters to have areas of specialization, such as city government or education. In Sarasota and Lawrence, where the convergence partner is a cable channel, television reporters are almost certain to be generalists and likely to have less experience than print journalists, as well as a shorter tenure with the company.

One resulting problem was a lack of understanding of local issues. Newspaper reporters in smaller markets were frustrated by having to continually fill in the knowledge gaps for their cable counterparts, sometimes in the middle of a news event. One reporter said cable staffers ask such basic questions that it is obvious they have not read the first thing about the subject matter. "They need to be spoon-fed a lot of times," a colleague agreed. Others were troubled by repeated mistakes by television folks. They felt, not unreasonably, that because of the cross-promotion of convergence partners, those mistakes reflected on the quality of the paper. Citing misspelled names, incorrect titles and other inaccuracies on the cable news, one reporter explained that "if we allow little errors to creep in that undermine the quality of the work we're trying to do, it does us all a disservice."

The lack of television beats also was an impediment to the development of both stories and relationships between staffs. Convergence "would be made easier if TV reporters had beats that mirrored (the) newspaper, so reporters would work more closely together from the INCEPTION of a story," a newspaper reporter wrote on his questionnaire. "TV guys need to be in the loop from the VERY beginning of most stories, not brought in at the end." In the larger news organizations, several print journalists said they wouldn't know whom to call should they even want to contact a television reporter about a story. Some said they just left it up to their editors to initiate contact.

Newsroom routines: Typifications

Newspaper journalists mentally sort stories into categories, such as hard news (newsworthy occurrences potentially available to analysis or interpretation), spot news (of which fires are the prototypical example), or soft news (feature or human-interest stories) (Tuchman, 1973). Major stories may transcend those definitions, but news routines are flexible enough to fold them into the general typification scheme as well, and to deal with them accordingly (Berkowitz, 1992).

Television places a greater overall emphasis on spot news than do newspapers. Although none of the broadcast or cable outlets in this study fell into the "if it bleeds, it leads" trap, cops and car crashes were still far more likely to be covered on television than in the paper. Barring details that newspaper journalists deem newsworthy for some other reason, such events typically make the next day's paper as briefs or police blotter items, if they make it at all.

In contrast, newspaper journalists see themselves as more likely to focus on hard or soft news. Several said television journalists do not care about the kinds of issue-oriented stories the paper is good at; convergence potentially increases the emphasis on "the more splashy TV-oriented stories," added one writer. Even aside from television's obvious need for more visual stories, this perceived difference is potentially problematic for convergence efforts. Some newspaper journalists saw television coverage as dragging down the quality of the paper, such as the reporter who wrote that one of the greatest challenges of convergence was "TV reporters who do lame stories and force print into (the) same story because it has to be in (the) newspaper." Journalists generally disagreed with the statement "the same story can be told equally well in any medium."

Professionalism: Newsroom culture

The dictionary definition of culture in the context of this study is "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices" that characterizes a social or occupational group (Merriam-Webster, 2003). For newspaper journalists, it can perhaps best be described as encompassing the professional values of expertise, ethics, public service and autonomy cited above, and the work routines that foster those values. Many newspaper journalists continue to see television journalists as belonging to a different culture. "I went to j-school to be a journalist, not to be a multimedia person, not to be a TV person, not to multitask," said one print reporter who expressed some of the strongest views on this topic. "I have never liked TV journalism. I've always thought it's abhorrent, a subspecies."

This perception that "we" are different from "them" is combined with a conviction among many that they are just not cut out for television. "When you see yourself in 3-D walking around and talking, it's one shitty-looking scene," one print reporter said, describing himself harshly as shy, with crooked teeth and bad hair. Sizable numbers of print journalists seem to be sitting convergence out so far, though the degree of participation varies both within and among newsrooms.

Lawrence, the smallest market studied here, was the only one in which a majority of print journalists appear regularly on television, though not all were enthusiastic about it. In the other newsrooms, some participated while many watched. Communication with the online and television staffs rests primarily on budget meetings and shared news budgets, plus the occasional e-mail or phone call about a major story. "Among the news reporters, it's really still a pretty unusual thing," a reporter from a larger market said of convergence. The questionnaire confirmed that convergence has not had a significant effect on day-to-day jobs. "There are many, many print reporters in the room who have never worked at all with our TV operation. I don't think it's because they don't want to; I think it's because they don't know how," an editor wrote. "Until thinking about how to do a story across platforms becomes second nature to the majority of those working in a converged newsroom, I don't think we're even beginning to realize the possibilities." Questionnaire responses supported a lack of uniform effort, with journalists disagreeing with the statement "the effort necessary to make convergence work is shared equitably throughout our news operation."

In Lawrence's newly renovated News Center, newspaper, cable and online journalists work in adjacent cubicles arranged by topic area rather than medium. Elsewhere, journalists are physically separated; the bigger the market, the more separated they are. In Sarasota, the cable studio and production units occupy a corner of the print newsroom, with the small online staff nearby. In Tampa, broadcast and newspaper journalists are on different floors, connected by an atrium; the Web staff office is to the side of the television newsroom. In Dallas, the cable channel, network affiliate and newspaper are each in separate buildings; a few online staffers work in the newspaper or television newsroom, but most are on a separate floor of the *Morning News* building.

A general lack of training for on-air work, cited as a problem by print journalists in all four newsrooms, added to the misgivings. Reporters were mystified about how to convert a story to "one minute of sound," as one reporter who recently had begun doing television pieces put it, adding she wanted guidance about what to say, tone of voice, reporting techniques -- everything. Questionnaire results confirm a lack of training as problematic; journalists disagreed with the statement that their company had provided appropriate training for a transition to work in a converged newsroom.

Yet despite this physical separation and cultural skepticism, one of the clear benefits to convergence that emerged from this study was a realization by many newspaper journalists that their television counterparts had substance after all. Newspaper journalists agreed more strongly with the statement "I enjoy working with people who have professional strengths different from my own" than with any other on the questionnaire; in fact, not a single print journalist responding to the questionnaire disagreed. Newspaper journalists also generally agreed, though less strongly, that they had gained respect for colleagues in other parts of the news organization. One reporter who said she had "always sort of dismissed them as hair spray, bow ties, vapid airheads" realized when she began doing television stories herself how much work goes into putting a news package together. "It gave me a lot more respect for television reporters," she said. "It isn't all theater."

Professionalism: Competition

Newspaper journalists almost universally pointed out that they had been socialized to consider television journalists to be competitors. Suddenly being asked to see them as colleagues instead was difficult for many. Even in newsrooms where the main manifestation of convergence was merely sharing sources or information, doing so did not come easily. Indeed, a major challenge of convergence involves "sharing info with irresponsible TV reporters who can't keep a damn secret," as one newspaper reporter wrote on his questionnaire. In seeking to overcome this mind set, journalists in all media universally stressed the importance of interpersonal relationships. The trust vital to easing competitive tensions evolves as part of a one-to-one process. You have to "lubricate that relationship," one newspaper editor said, citing the importance of informal social gatherings. You "stop thinking of so-and-so as a bimbo, they stop thinking of you as an asshole."

But walking the walk is always harder than talking the talk. Newspaper journalists remain especially possessive of enterprise stories, generally hard news stories resulting from individual initiative and legwork -- what researchers term "active discovery" of information (McManus, 1997). The competitiveness over such stories is so entrenched that news managers have had to establish policies to deal with them, such as letting the newsroom where the story originates make the call on where it should run first. While newspaper editors sometimes do give the story to the television crew (which then prompts viewers to buy the next day's paper for more details), they typically ask that it not run until the late newscast. The reason is straight out of a primer on newsroom routines: If it runs at 6, the competition has time to do its own version before their presses roll. Although television and Web journalists chaff when newspaper people embargo a story, the practice seems common with major enterprise pieces, particularly in competitive newspaper markets.

A number of newspaper journalists, however, said they had gotten over this attitude, citing either the professional norm of public service or the more selfish opinion that "it's still my story." "We're reporters. It doesn't matter what platform we're a reporter for," one journalist said. "It's a different place to put your reporting." Moreover, the questionnaire results indicated mild agreement with the idea that convergence actually had given them a "leg up on the competition." Nonetheless, the questionnaire does suggest lingering resistance, with print journalists disagreeing only mildly with the statement "the fact that we now are continually `scooping ourselves' bothers me."

News narrative: Storytelling skills

Different media forms obviously demand different narrative styles, and the newspaper journalists in this study were very attuned to issues related to medium-driven attributes of telling a story. The most obvious difference is that television stories require a strong visual component, and the narrative often is driven by those images. Newspaper people are not accustomed to thinking of stories that way. Nor are newspaper people accustomed to thinking of THEMSELVES in visual terms -- until they are asked to be on television. "TV people are visually pleasing," one male newspaper journalist said. "I need to not be bashful about having makeup in my drawer."

Television also uses words, of course, but the words are heard rather than read. Newspaper journalists have discovered that this means a significantly different writing style. Writing in "super-simple sentences" with a "really straight-forward delivery" takes time to master, said a reporter who found script writing to be the hardest part about television.

There are other differences that newspaper journalists found challenging, as well. Television reporters are more a part of the story than print reporters believe themselves to be, and some found this disconcerting. "You have to package yourself within the story. It's a whole different kind of journalism," a print reporter explained. Differences in the newsgathering process also affect the resulting narrative; a number of newspaper journalists contrasted the intrusive nature of a video camera and crew with the unobtrusiveness of a lone reporter with a notepad. "I can be a fly on the wall, but it's hard to be a fly on the wall with a huge tripod," said a print reporter.

The Web has its own narrative requirements, though the fact that online stories rely on written text made print journalists more comfortable with it as a storytelling medium. "I see it as a good thing to promote a medium that involves words," one reporter said with a smile. Newspaper journalists recognized the Web's ability to tell a story in depth and detail, though they admitted they were not doing as much to support those narrative capabilities as they might. Only a few described supplying additional materials for the Web site, such as the sports reporter who sent back digital Super Bowl "postcards" or the education reporter who generated a database of dropout rates.

Yet despite the recognition that different media require different skills, most print journalists believed their own skills remained vital. They agreed with the questionnaire statement "my journalistic skills are valuable in any news medium" and rejected the idea that good writing has lost importance. At the same time, they mildly agreed "good journalists should be able to tell their stories well in multiple formats" and said doing so did not stress them out. In fact, the interviews suggested a growing confidence in their abilities among those who had participated in convergence efforts. One converged reporter said that at first he was scared he would say something stupid, but now "my heart rate barely picks up. My biggest fear is that my lips are chapped."

It would appear from these preliminary questionnaire and interview responses that although different media forms clearly do demand different storytelling approaches, journalists feel the skills can be mastered -- and some admit the new challenges can be re-energizing. "Challenges are fun -- they keep you on your toes," one newspaper reporter said. Another said he felt he was in a "fertile time mentally. Doing TV has done that for me."

News narrative: Storytelling norms

Print journalists indicated ambivalence about the effect of convergence on such professional storytelling norms as credibility, accuracy, and quality. They agreed strongly that "the quality of the story is more important than the technology used to tell it" but were unsure whether convergence had affected that quality. They expressed concern that the pressure for immediacy might be "overwhelming the need to get a good story with accuracy and perspective," as one veteran reporter wrote on his questionnaire. But as a group, they were neutral on the questionnaire statement "the Web's demand for timely information jeopardizes our ability to get the facts right before a story runs." At the same time, they clearly saw immediacy as a benefit when a big story broke and appreciated being able to get the news out fast. People are conditioned to go to the Web site if they see smoke, so they can find out what's going on, an editor explained. "People get information differently now," he said. "We're not a newspaper company. We're an information company." In general, newspaper journalists appreciated the new ability to tell a story in different ways. As one reporter with considerable on-air experience put it: "TV is the appetizer. The newspaper is the main course. (The Web site) is the dessert."

It is true that, as alluded to above, some print journalists still have a tendency to look down their noses at television journalists, in an attitude one news manager described as "they've got the blow dryers, we've got the investigative reporters." Television news is "a slice of the pie instead of the whole thing," an editor said. "It's often shallow, quick. … I hate when TV reporters call themselves journalists." Certainly, television stories are short, and many newspaper writers said they found that challenging -- even startling, given the amount of work needed for a one-minute piece. "It takes so much time, and when you're finished, you realized you've just done one story!" one veteran newspaper journalist exclaimed. "Learning to explain (a) complex story in a few sound bites" is a significant challenge for newspaper writers, another said on his questionnaire. Several described television news as "a performance" in ways they felt print journalism was not. And it can be overly driven by pressures to be entertaining in order to attract viewers. As one print reporter wrote on his questionnaire, "I don't EVER want to be affected by the B.S. of sweeps week."

Yet a number of print journalists said that though they had no desire to give up newspapers for a career in television, they realized "these people work very hard, and they're good at what they do," as one reporter said. Like others quoted above, he added that convergence had given him a new appreciation of the different forms of journalism. "It kind of forced me to accept how difficult that job is," another newspaper writer said. "I still love to make fun of TV people, but it doesn't mean I think I can do what they do." Interviews with television and online journalists confirmed that despite stylistic differences, professional storytelling norms are remarkably similar across media -- and one effect of convergence is to increase recognition of those similarities.

More on the up side

In fact, although the previous discussion has emphasized the challenges to convergence from a sociological perspective, many journalists indicate a willingness to accommodate changes to their news work and even welcome something new. "I've learned quite a bit and have had my opinions change and have had some of the print-side arrogance knocked out of me," a newspaper editor wrote on his questionnaire. A number also admitted in their interviews that at least for them, early fears about a dramatic increase in work or an equally dramatic cultural shift had not played out.

The strongest indication that newspaper journalists may eventually adapt their news routines and other aspects of news work to accommodate convergence can be summed up this way: The concerns that emerged in this study are mainly with the way convergence is being carried out. With some exceptions among individuals, they are not fundamental concerns with the idea of convergence itself. Newspaper journalists are indeed worried about time management, competition and the other issues of news work discussed above. At the same time, they believe convergence is inevitable -- and that it's a good thing for their careers, their company, and their readers.

A commitment to public service is a hallmark of the sociological construct of professionalism, and many journalists see convergence as benefiting audiences by providing more information in multiple formats suited to changing lifestyles and news needs. "People don't get their news from just one source any more. You've got to be where they want you, when they want you," one editor said. And at a very basic level, having partners means "we have more eyes and ears out in the community," as a reporter said. Questionnaire responses indicated mild agreement with the statement "my company is better able to serve our audience because of our decision to converge news operations." Certainly, newsroom managers have sought to promote better journalism as the goal of convergence efforts. "If synergy is about economic efficiency, then it isn't ever going to take hold in the newsroom. If it's about quality journalism and doing things better with more tools, then it will," one manager said. "I don't expect the newsroom to rally around synergy as an economic model because they won't -- and frankly, they shouldn't."

Journalists also saw convergence as a savvy move by their company. Although some said the jury would remain out until it could be determined whether converged operations would be moneymakers, most applauded their employer's decision to try something risky. "It's made perfect sense to me for years. It strengthens us and serves our customers in ways that outweigh any drawbacks. AND it's inevitable if newspapers are to survive," an editor wrote on his questionnaire. Indeed, many journalists said their companies should be spending more, not less, on convergence. "Efforts by management to offer multimedia operations on a shoestring budget are only a charade that will backfire," a reporter wrote. "Convergence takes strong financial support, cross-training, a nurturing environment, and high standards to thrive." Questionnaire results indicated disagreement with the statement "convergence has cost this company more than convergence is worth."

And finally, journalists saw convergence as a plus for them personally, agreeing with the questionnaire statement "working in a converged newsroom environment is good for my career." Many cited its benefits in their interviews, too. As one newspaper journalist said, "People who can switch back and forth are going to have a better opportunity for a job." At the very least, they considered experience with convergence a smart insurance policy. "I've got a lot more options now," said one print reporter with considerable on-air time. "I've demonstrated my versatility."

The evidence, then, is somewhat conflicting. It suggests that convergence poses numerous challenges to the way newspaper news work is done. At the same time, it points toward a willingness to change how that work is done -- or perhaps, more fundamentally, how it is defined.

SUMMARY and DISCUSSION

The first research question posed here asked how convergence challenges existing norms and routines of newspaper news work, and the findings offer a roster of answers related to news routines, professionalism, and narrative forms. Time pressures are a major issue for journalists struggling to produce stories for television and the Web -- not instead of stories for the newspaper, but in addition to their regular print duties and typically at no extra pay. Structures that have evolved to facilitate the production of news, such as beat systems and typification schemes, do not translate seamlessly across media formats. Cultural differences have led some journalists to minimize their involvement in convergence efforts, and competitive tendencies can get in the way of even low-impact requests for cooperation and information sharing among convergence partners. Different media require different forms of storytelling, and some print journalists feel ill-equipped to deal with those requirements without jeopardizing quality -- and looking bad. And although many print journalists say they have gained respect for television colleagues, stereotypes of television people as a lesser breed of journalist still can be heard around the newspaper newsroom.

The second research question concerned the ways in which convergence meshes with existing norms and routines of newspaper news work, and the findings reveal several of these, as well. Despite the persistence of stereotypes in some quarters, many have discovered that doing good television news is harder than it looks and requires journalistic skills they never suspected television colleagues possessed. Newspaper journalists also see the ability to provide information more quickly and in a variety of forms as a real public service, recognizing that a product that comes out once a day is no longer sufficient to keep an audience well-informed in a 24/7 news environment.

Moreover, they see convergence as generally a good idea, both for their employers and for their own careers. This finding, which came through strongly in both the interview and questionnaire data, suggests that at least among the print journalists studied here (all of whom are of course working in already-converged organizations), ways may be found around the current stumbling blocks. To reiterate, concerns focus on the way convergence is being done more than on the idea itself. Continuing research is needed to track the ways in which the existing "news net" may be recast to smooth out differences between print and television newsroom structures, in which notions of competition are reconfigured and journalists become more skillful and comfortable with producing stories that take advantage of the narrative forms inherent in different media. Indeed, some of these changes are foreshadowed in this study, notably shifting definitions of competition.

So in addressing the third research question, which asked what aspects of newspaper news work appear most likely to change in response to convergence, it would appear logical that the most likely avenues lie along the paths of least resistance. If notions of competition are indeed already changing, then one of the simplest entrees to convergence for a news organization considering it might be to look for ways to encourage cross-media cooperation and information sharing as a first step. There are various ways to do this. The *Lawrence Journal-World*, the smallest newspaper in this study, has created a brand new newsroom in which journalists from the various media work side by side. The largest paper, the *Dallas Morning News*, has less flexibility to tear up its existing infrastructure and start over. But it has promoted "synergy" by emphasizing the need for reporters and editors to share information with previous competitors across media platforms, hoping the trust that comes from such sharing will grow, one pair of journalists at a time. The rather surprising finding that newspaper journalists actually enjoy working with counterparts in other media, and have gained respect for them by doing so, lends credence to this strategy. And the general support of the online component and its potential to keep readers informed in between editions of the newspaper suggests relatively few barriers to cooperation with the Web staff.

In general, then, the sociological issues that involve professionalism may be the most open to modification through convergence efforts, as newspaper journalists' attitudes and mind sets gradually change to incorporate television and online journalists in the professional circle that is "us." In contrast, issues related to newsroom structures and storytelling norms are more challenging. Production of content for other media presents higher sociological hurdles for a variety of reasons that this study makes clear. Deadlines and the time constraints they impose will not go away. It is unlikely that television newsrooms will ever be staffed at the level of a newspaper newsroom, and economic factors make it hard for smaller markets to hire and keep experienced television journalists. The size of television news staffs and the demands on their time work against such newspaper structures as beats. The nature of the medium dictates that television retain its emphasis on the visual and therefore on certain kinds of stories, told in certain ways. And there are legitimate, multi-faceted issues of quality raised by stretching journalists across multiple platforms.

That said, some of these sociological barriers also could be at least mitigated with appropriate management actions. Newspaper journalists can receive the training they need to be competent producers of multimedia content. Accommodations in work schedules can be made so that journalists can do different things -- something many said they enjoy -- and not just more things, which adds to the pressure of an already stressful profession. And as the news organizations in this study are discovering, technology can be an enormous aide, as well. Software that makes it easy to share news budgets, programs that can be used to produce stories for different formats, and digital cameras that facilitate sharing visual content across all three platforms are among the investments that make it possible for journalists to do a job that involves juggling more balls than in a past that, as one reporter said, seems "like simple times now."

Journalism schools clearly have a role to play here, as the newsroom managers in this study pointed out. Although getting existing employees to modify their outlooks and routines to accommodate convergence can be difficult, new hires are being told that it is simply part of the job. Some apparently resist the idea; several managers asked the researcher what in the heck we were teaching our print majors these days to make them hate broadcasters so much when they came out of j-school. On the other hand, managers expressed concerns that too much convergence in the curriculum is a problem if it produces graduates who are a mile wide but only an inch deep, generalists who are not really strong at anything and are especially ill-suited to an entry-level job at a small local newspaper with no convergence prospects anywhere on the horizon. In other words, newspaper employers are looking for journalists who understand what it takes to produce stories in multiple formats and are open-minded about doing so -- but are still proficient at reporting and writing for print. As educators, we may need to revisit the rationale behind rigidly sequenced programs without discarding our ability to focus students on a career path that probably will continue to put primary emphasis on one medium for at least the near term.

However, commercial and deregulatory trends indicate that converged newsrooms are unlikely to go away, though the optimal approach to convergence is likely to vary widely, as is its timing in any particular market. This study suggests that newsroom structures and approaches to informing the public are likely to contribute to preserving distinctions among various news products and the journalists who create them for some time to come. At the same time, it points toward enormous potential for increased cooperation among journalists and the likelihood that creative professionals will find an expanding number of ways to provide new outlets for their work.

A great deal more research into convergence is called for as the process and the idea evolve over time and across markets. In addition to continuing to examine the effects within newsrooms, researchers will want to explore the fundamentally important issue of the impact on audiences. A variety of research methods should be applied in this pursuit. The research described here derived from four case studies, and the findings are not generalizable to all newsrooms experimenting with convergence. Nor can claims be made about the degree to which the journalists who participated in this study are representative of others in their own newsroom since they were not randomly selected. Different methodologies can address these issues. That said, the virtue of a case study is in its ability to assist in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation (Stake, 1994). It is hoped that in addressing those goals, the current study has proved valuable.

Table 1: Questionnaire responses

This table shows the mean score (with the standard deviation in parentheses below each score) for all journalists who completed and returned a questionnaire, then for journalists whose primary affiliation was with the indicated medium. The statements are part of a 54-item questionnaire given to all interviewees, using a 7-point Likert scale in which a "1" corresponds to "strongly disagree," a "4" is neutral and a "7" corresponds to "strongly agree."

Questionnaire Statement	All Journalists (n = 90)	Newspaper Journalists[a] (n = 49)	Online Journalists (n = 23)	Television Journalists[b] (n = 18)
Our decision to converge newsrooms has resulted in more work for me personally.	5.23 (1.86)	5.10 (2.01)	5.26 (1.39)	5.53 (2.00)
Convergence encourages journalists to be jacks-of-all-trades but masters of none.	3.45 (1.69)	3.56 (1.77)	3.48 (1.41)	3.11 (1.84)
Asking journalists to work across converged media results in mediocre journalism.	2.93 (1.63)	3.27 (1.67)	2.22 (1.59)	2.94 (1.30)
The same story can be told equally well in any medium.	2.77 (1.96)	2.77 (2.04)	2.74 (1.79)	2.83 (2.04)
The effort necessary to make convergence work is shared equitably throughout our news operation.	2.91 (1.60)	2.69 (1.57)	3.09 (1.56)	3.29 (1.72)
Our decision to combine newsrooms has significantly changed my day-to-day job.	4.20 (2.03)	3.71 (2.05)	5.32 (1.76)	4.17 (1.86)
My company provided appropriate training for me to make the transition to work in a converged newsroom.	3.11 (1.66)	2.97 (1.67)	3.50 (1.71)	3.00 (1.57)
I enjoy working with people who have professional strengths different from my own.	6.48 (.75)	6.61 (.64)	6.22 (.85)	6.44 (.86)
I have gained respect for the people in other parts of the news operation as a result of convergence.	5.71 (1.46)	5.45 (1.70)	5.91 (1.16)	6.17 (.92)
Converging our newsrooms has given us a leg up on the competition here in our market.	5.48 (1.60)	5.01 (1.78)	6.044 (1.15)	6.06 (1.18)
The fact that we now are continually "scooping ourselves" bothers me.	3.07 (1.93)	3.66 (2.00)	2.04 (1.46)	2.81 (1.72)
My journalistic skills are valuable in any news medium.	6.02 (1.37)	5.92 (1.58)	6.35 (.94)	5.89 (1.18)
Good writing seems less important to journalism now than it used to.	2.97 (2.09)	3.12 (2.18)	2.91 (2.07)	2.61 (1.91)
Good journalists should be able to tell their stories well in multiple formats.	5.25 (1.61)	4.91 (1.59)	5.78 (1.38)	5.50 (1.76)
The need to produce stories in multiple formats stresses me out.	3.44 (1.51)	3.67 (1.72)	2.91 (1.20)	3.50 (1.15)
The quality of the story is more important than the technology used to tell it.	6.22 (1.11)	6.36 (1.01)	6.04 (.98)	6.06 (1.47)
Convergence has had no significant impact on the quality of our individual news products.	3.49 (1.76)	4.15 (1.67)	2.70 (1.64)	2.69 (1.45)
The Web's demand for timely information jeopardizes our ability to get the facts right before a story runs.	3.52 (1.80)	3.99 (1.79)	3.39 (1.64)	2.39 (1.58)
My company is better able to serve our audience because of our decision to converge news operations.	5.61 (1.45)	5.45 (1.54)	6.17 (.83)	5.33 (1.68)
Convergence has cost this company more than convergence is worth.	2.62 (1.57)	3.11 (1.63)	1.65 (.83)	2.56 (1.63)
Working in a converged newsroom environment is good for my career.	5.86 (1.40)	5.51 (1.54)	6.48 (.90)	6.00 (1.28)
Overall, converged newsrooms are a good idea.	5.66 (1.44)	5.39 (1.59)	6.22 (1.17)	5.67 (1.14)

a) One journalist who splits his time between print and television is included with the newspaper respondents, the medium in which he has the most longevity.

b) One journalist who serves all three media as a multimedia coordinator is included with the television respondents because of his physical location in the news organization.

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AMERICA STRIKES BACK – A COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES COVERAGE OF U.S. POLICY AFTER PEARL HARBOR AND 9/11

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ABSTRACT

The recent months have put the spotlight squarely on U.S. foreign policy's influence on world affairs. For that reason, the U.S. news media play an important role in describing the administration's actions to the public. Given that U.S. news media outlets have been accused of being more patriotic and hawkish in covering U.S. foreign policy since 9/11, this comparative study explores whether this biased coverage is a recent phenomenon or whether crisis situations always influence the style of media coverage.

The study analyzed the *New York Times* coverage of U.S. policy between enemy attack and U.S. counterstrike during the Pearl Harbor attacks and the 9/11 strikes. Results in both cases supported the prediction that the newspaper would fulfill its independent "watchdog" role by providing critical portrayals of U.S. policy. After the 9/11 attacks though, the paper resorted more to dramatic and speculative story lines. Possible explanations and implications of these findings for future research are discussed.

AMERICA STRIKES BACK – A COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES COVERAGE OF U.S. POLICY AFTER PEARL HARBOR AND 9/11

The picture chosen by the media to represent the iconic image of September 11 was that of three firefighters securing an intact U.S. flag to a pole protruding from the rubble of the World Trade Center. The photo evoked memories of Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning World War II shot of Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima, in February 1945. The analogy between the two photographs was initially accompanied by the analogy of September 11 to the Japanese attacks on Battle Ship Row in Pearl Harbor. Though this particular analogy was eventually suppressed by the administration and media alike because it suggested unpreparedness, the media used the analogy to argue that each attack propelled the United States into war against its enemy (Hanson, 2001).

In a complex world, what the public knows and understands is largely a result of what the news media report. Very few people have access to first-hand information about United States and foreign policy. This limited access renders the news media instrumental in translating real-world events into public knowledge (Brown & Vincent, 1994; Merrill, 1991). Jamieson and Waldman (2003) describe this process with two metaphors: reporters first need to ascertain the importance of a world event (metaphor of the lens), and then structure the resulting coverage of their view into a report (metaphor of the frame). By selecting a specific frame to describe an event or political personality, journalists shape public opinion (Entman, 1993; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). This framing effect of news motivates interested parties (in particular the U.S. administration and its various oppositions) to exert influence on the media by advancing some frames and downplaying others (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003; Kieh, 1990; Parenti, 1989).

However, reporters might also adopt certain frames simply as a result of their current worldview. In times of extreme crises, Lebens Nacos (1990) argues that reporters view events through a patriotic lens. The patriotic lens moves reporters to cast aside professional skepticism and distance toward political actors and adopt a champion role for the nation and its leaders (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003).

A comparison of the *New York Times*' treatment of the United States' reaction to the Pearl Harbor attacks with that of the reaction to the September 11 attacks is particularly relevant for two reasons. First, despite some similarities between the two events, the differences between the nature of the attackers and the public and administration's reaction are significant enough to expect a different coverage. Second, the ongoing controversy about the press' ability and desire to fulfill a "watchdog function" remains unresolved. Thus, the present study analyzes, whether the nation's "flagship paper" covered the two events differently.

BACKGROUND

For any U.S. administration the most defining moments after the country is attacked– besides grief and public condemnation – is the preparation of the public for a chosen or possible military response. This "pre-war" period usually ends at the moment of U.S. counterattack on the territory of the foe. This period is also the time when the media can assume a powerful role as shaper of events. Timothy Cook (1998) argues that "the American news media today are not merely part of politics; they are part of government" (p. 3). What Cook, and other scholars, assert is that reporters help determine the course of events through the frames they choose.

When the Japanese planes destroyed the U.S. fleet in Pearl Harbor at dawn on December 7, 1941, they effectively ended a long debate in American society regarding the role of the United States in the world (MacDougall, 1999). From the "Day of Infamy" (Lord, 2001; Wallace, 2001) until April 18, 1942 it took the United States roughly four months to respond in kind. Until that day, any war news was negative. One by one U.S. military holdings in the Pacific were lost to Japan. Then on April 18th came an event that raised American spirits: Lt. Col. James Doolittle of the U.S. Army Air Corps led a force of 16 planes on a bombing raid on the Japanese home islands (Glines, 1999; Nelson, 2002). Damage of the "Doolittle Raid" was minimal, but it had a psychological effect on the American people – America was hitting back. Ultimately, the United States ended up in two roles: not only was it an attacking rather than defending force after being drawn into the conflict by an adversary, but it was also one of the major victors of the entire war. As a result, the United States assumed global defense commitments and treaties afterwards.

While equally surprising in nature, the assault on September 11 was not carried out by an enemy country with territory of its own, but by a transnational terrorist organization (Al Qaeda). Toppling a regime (such as Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany) is very different than interdicting small bands of guerilla fighters – especially if the goal in the latter case is to get them all. By labeling the attacks of September 11 "an act of war" (rather than a crime, which was the usual definition of terror attacks before September 11), President Bush framed them in a way that required a military, not a legal, response. The media readily accepted this frame (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003).

Yet, for a counter-terrorism operation, *Enduring Freedom* (the Bush administration's name for the military operations in Afghanistan) left a strategic wake. The U.S. plan came together hastily; this relative speed contrasts sharply with not only the four months of preparation to strike against the Japanese, but also with the more recent operations Desert Storm and Allied Force. These earlier operations benefited from simpler strategic circumstances and stronger pre-war alliance arrangements (Anderson, 2002; Conetta, 2002). Once the Taliban regime in Afghanistan emerged as a proxy or second enemy, the initial goal of bringing the leaders of Al Qaeda to justice and destroying their organization became more complex and controversial. As a result, in the weeks leading up to the war, the Bush administration exhibited an artful ambiguity about the goals and nature of the prospective military operation in Afghanistan (Woodward, 2002). When air strikes began on October 7, the administration had demonstrated some restraint in waiting 25 days before responding militarily. By historical standards, however, three-and-half weeks is not a long time to pause before initiating a large-scale military campaign (Conetta, 2002).

In sum, the two events were different in the following ways: in waiting period and preparation before striking back, in different clarity on who to attack and what to do afterwards, and in the transparency of military versus law enforcement.

THEORY

The study of news content is directed by the assumption that American journalism serves a watchdog function for society (Hutchins, 1947; Sigal, 1973). Acting as a watchdog, the press keeps an eye on government in order to expose – and thus prevent – abuse of power (Downie & Kaiser, 2002). Journalists have been regarded as neutral observers and government adversaries who seek to neutralize the political "spin doctors" in government (Brown & Vincent, 1994). Self-evaluation studies among journalists show that journalists cite investigation of government statements, analysis and interpretation of complicated issues, and timely discussion of national policy as central professional goals (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Patterson & Donsbach, 1996). Picard (1985) viewed the press as a tool to promote free exchange of information and a genuine voice of the people. Ultimately, in its watchdog function the press protects democracy against abuses of government (Altschull, 1984).

Because the success of our democracy depends so heavily on journalists' exercise of their constitutionally protected mission, it is important to understand the ways shifting journalistic perspectives alter the facts that are deemed important (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Following the Watergate years, a different view of the press emerged accordingly. Political actors became increasingly accustomed to delivering to reporters the preferred story around which news could be built, and increased the pressure on the press to generate public support for their policy decisions (Kieh, 1990; Parenti, 1989). In particular U.S. administrations succeeded in using the press as a tool to create public support by providing only that information that supported their viewpoints (Kieh, 1990). It appears highly unlikely under these circumstances that news story content could be critical of U.S. policy.

Jensen (1993), in fact, charges the U.S. media with trading their traditional adversarial watchdog role for profits and deregulations during the Reagan-Bush era. Critics who believe that the press has lost much of its adversarial role refer to the intense criticism of the media coverage during the Gulf War as further evidence for their position (Hoover, 1993). Gans (1979) provided an explanation for the press' reluctance to oppose political power by stating that the prominent socio-economic status of the holders of the journalistic occupation produces lenses and frames that resemble those of societal elites. According to this view, journalists may believe that they serve as watchdogs, but actually are not the best equipped to fulfill this role.

From the notion that journalists "think like the power brokers," comes the criticism that they are shaping an event's outcome. Arguing that reporters are oftentimes participants with a substantial degree of independent power, Carter (1959) called the press "the fourth branch of government." The more important the role public opinion plays in the progression of a political conflict, the greater the potential of journalists' choices to move events (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). This has included in recent years increasingly the prediction of future events. In the role of the "soothsayer" (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003), journalists tell the public not only what happened, but what will happen Moreover, they often pair their predictions with a rationale.

This speculative pursuit might be less of an issue in ordinary times, as the press appears to remain sufficiently distant from those it covers. However, in times of crises, reporters tend to abandon irony, cynicism, and even skepticism in order to see the world through a nationalistic and patriotic lens. In those times the press appears particularly prone echoing the frames of those in power. Scholars have observed, for instance, that during crises press coverage becomes more favorable to the president (Lebens Nacos, 1990).

This research examines two aspects of the press' role during crises. The first explores both the influence of patriotic reactions after a crisis and their impact on the style and implied impartiality of the coverage of the administration's reaction. The second involves the more general tension between the media assuming a critical adversary role toward government (watchdog) and becoming a concurring promoter of conformity to the administration's view (manipulated by "spin").

Given the different nature and consequences of the two crises, we asked the following questions: to what extent did the stories present differing accounts of the crisis aftermath and movement toward retaliatory action? Next, were the differences systematic? If they were systematic, how are they to be explained?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The two research interests delineated above are examined by two research questions and hypotheses. First, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, the press embraced both the frames the White House offered: first, the attacks were attacks of war, and not crimes. Second, the terrorists attacked not as a reaction to U.S. foreign policy, but because they hate the American system and values. Thus, the spotlight moved from a third-person description of government activity to an inclusive, collective account (America vs. the enemy). This is notable because the ensuing conflict in Afghanistan was in the end not a collective effort in the same sense World War II was. While the struggle after Pearl Harbor was daily reality for most Americans, the collective character of the Afghanistan War was for most only psychological. More government "spin" should be expected after the September 11 attacks than after Pearl Harbor to make the reaction sound more collective. While there is no theoretical basis for making specific predictions about the coverage of either event, the following research question is raised:

> *Does news coverage of U.S. policy toward its respective adversary differ between the two events in (a) the factual news content regarding U.S. policy, and (b) the editorial content critical of U.S. policy?*

The second part of the investigation analyzes whether the watchdog function was regained after the initial shock of the attack. In other words, did the press present the administration's reaction dispassionately? Leading analysts and commentators of recent times seem to be more critical of Bush's foreign policy directions than those following Roosevelt's foreign policy (Barry, 2002; Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1986; Scheer, 2003).

Conversely, initial analysis of print and television coverage of the aftermath of September 11 does not reveal a critically detached media position toward the Bush administration (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Therefore, the first two-part hypothesis is:

> ***H1a:*** *News stories of the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in 2001 were more opinionated than news stories of the U.S. policy toward Japan in 1941/42.*
>
> ***H1b:*** *News stories of the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in 2001 cite fewer critical sources than news stories of the U.S. policy toward Japan in 1941/42*

Perhaps the most damaging accusation against the press in the wake of the September 11 attacks was the contention that it abandoned factual portrayal of events for dramatized accounts that assigned both victimhood and agency to the nation as a whole (e.g., "A Nation Responds" or "America Strikes Back"). It appears that the press did sacrifice accuracy and detachment to a lesser extent in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attacks. Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

> ***H2:*** *News stories of the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in 2001 were more focused on dramatic dimensions and less focused on explanatory dimensions than news stories of the U.S. policy toward Japan in 1941/42.*

METHODOLOGY

The research questions and hypotheses were analyzed with data collected from the *New York Times* from December 8, 1941 (the day after the Pearl Harbor attacks) through April 19, 1942 (the day after the Doolittle raid on Japan), and September 12, 2001 through October 8, 2001 (the day after commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom).

The reason for choosing the *New York Times* is based on the following propositions. First, in order to compare journalistic trends and differences between those two periods, we chose a medium that was widely available to the publics in each time period. Print media in general were the primary source of information for the public in the 1940s (Media History Project, 1996), and print news stories still provide much of the information that guides formulation of public opinion about U.S. foreign policy (Just & Crigler, 1989; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Second, the *New York Times* is recognized as a leading news source. It is the major newspaper in the United States, and is published by a high-profile, prestigious organization. Moreover, it is read by elites, and has often been the object of foreign policy research (Barranco & Shyles, 1988). No other paper possesses comparable resources (e.g., a news staff of 650), esteem (e.g., it has won more Pulitzer Prizes than any other newspaper) or influence (e.g., most presidents of the United States look at page one of the *New York Times* even before their morning coffee) (Salisbury, 1980, p.5). As such, it is more able to challenge official versions of political events and assume a leadership position.

Content analysis was the chosen method to assess the *New York Times'* coverage of the U.S. government's reaction. The study focuses on the overt content. It sets aside latent connotative meanings that may or may not have been intended. Nevertheless, as Soesilo and Washburn (1994) pointed out, content analysis can reveal linguistic constructions of political reality, indicate the systematic biases they express, and suggest the political interests they serve.

The time periods between the attacks and the counter-strikes differed significantly. The period between the 9/11 attacks and the beginning of the U.S. air campaign in Afghanistan on October 7 was roughly four weeks (27 days). The Doolittle Raid on Japan, which occurred on April 18, 1942, happened about four months after the Pearl Harbor attacks. In order to compare the periods in terms of number of stories, it was decided to content analyze all articles from the 9/11 period (September 12 through October 8, 2001) and select a stratified random sample from 27 days of the Pearl Harbor period.

To accomplish that, we divided the four months into 19 weeks and the weeks of December 15-21, 1941, January 21-27, 1942, March 3-8, 1942, April 9-14, 1942 were randomly selected; we also added the day after the counter-strike (April 19, 1942). During these time periods, 392 news articles, editorials, and public opinion pieces (letters to the editor, invited guest columns) addressing the government's reaction were identified for the 9/11 timeframe, and 425 for the Pearl Harbor timeframe. Thus, a total of 817 newspaper articles were content analyzed.

In this case, the article was chosen as the unit of analysis. Narrative was coded by reading each newspaper article to determine its primary or dominant narrative and disposition. In their content analysis of the portrayal of the 1986-87 Irangate scandal, Brown and Vincent (1995) coded sentences as reports, inferences, or judgments, and then determined the major tone of the article. In a related study on the media portrayal of the Gulf War, Peer and Chestnut (1995) coded reports along nine policy dimensions and eight main sources. We adopted a coding method similar to those used in both studies. Each article was evaluated on four different dimensions.

The first dimension identified the category of the article as either a report, an inference, or a judgment according to the system developed by Hayakawa in 1972. Reports present verifiable statements or facts. Inferences include educated guesses and speculations, based on fact. Judgments are positive or negative evaluations (opinions, editorials).

The second evaluation identified whether the content addressing the U.S. policy was portrayed in a favorable, neutral, or unfavorable way, based on a coding system developed by Janis and Fadner (1943).

The third evaluation identified the dominant aspect of the U.S. policy along ten dimensions. The ten dimensions included (1) need for war (as opposed to sanctions or diplomacy), (2) foreign opinion (supportive or opposed to U.S. policy?), (3) domestic opinion, (4) danger to the United States (to deployed troops or civil population at home), (5) explanation of action (are administration's actions clear or obscure?), (6) justification of action, (7) selfish act (are administration's motives self-serving?), (8) consultation of Congress, (9) leadership (is president's leadership skillful or poor?), and (10) crisis (focus is on the administration's handling of the crisis itself).

The fourth evaluation identified the main source of the article as *New York Times* staff (including those in which no source was identified), U.S. government (president, cabinet, member of Congress), U.S. non-government (expert, ordinary citizen, military personnel), foreign government, or foreign non-government.

Intercoder reliability was established by having two independent coders code 15 percent of the sample. After a round of practice sessions, we compared findings and discussed content indicators of each variable. According to Holsti's (1969) reliability coefficient (the intercoder reliability across the categories ranged from 0.83 to 0.97 with an average of 0.90) and Scott's (1955) pi (the intercoder reliability across the categories ranged from 0.71 to 0.92 with an average of 0.83), reliability was sufficiently high.

To further establish the directionality of the ten dimensions and increase reliability of the coding frames, the ten indicators were discussed. We clustered the dimensions then into "dramatic dimensions" (need for war, foreign opinion, domestic opinion, leadership role, crisis revisited), and "explanatory dimensions" (danger to the United States, explanation of action, justification of action, consulting Congress) as a means to simplify interpretations. We eliminated the dimension "selfish act" from the clustering, as no consensus could be found.

RESULTS

The content analysis revealed a significant difference in story categories between the two times. In the four months after the Pearl Harbor attacks 305 (72%) of the coded articles were factual reports, while only 205 (52%) of the articles coded for the three weeks after 9/11 were reports. Consequently, a larger portion of the coverage of the 9/11 reaction included editorial and assumptive content regarding the U.S. government's position and actions than it was in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. In particular the category dealing with educated guesses and speculation showed a drastic difference (68% of all inferences came from the 9/11 time period). Recent cable and network news competition might have caused this difference and compel print reporters also to engage in predicting political events in the future (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003).

All analyses used the chi-square test to measure group by variable interaction and the Cramér's V and Kruskal's lambda or tau (1954) statistics to measure association between nominal data. These statistics are appropriate for testing hypotheses based on the association of categorical data with two or more independent samples (Norusis, 2002; Siegel & Castellan, 1988).

The two-part research question examined how the policy of the respective U.S. administration in office was portrayed in the *New York Times* in factual reports and editorial opinion pieces. The analysis indicates a significant difference in factual news stories, χ^2 (N=510) = 20.45, p<.001. The association coefficient V, which indicates the relationship between the category and the time periods, was .20 (p<.001). Reports were, as expected, mostly neutral in 1941/42 (72 percent of reports were neutral). However, after 9/11 reports had a favorable tone 27 percent of the time and a negative tone 20 percent of the time. These results are shown in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 about here]

No significant differences were found between the newspaper editorials in the two periods, χ^2 (N=213) = 2.64, p = n.s. The association coefficient V was equally nonsignificant (V= .11, p=n.s.). As figure 2 shows, the editorials published in 1941/42 were slightly more favorable toward the U.S. government's reaction than those published in 2001 (41% vs. 32%), but the critical opinion pieces were fairly equal (44% vs. 46%). In other words, editorial commentary in 2001 remained unusually neutral for op-ed pieces compared to the earlier period.

[Figure 2 about here]

The first part of Hypothesis 1 posited that news stories of the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan were more opinionated than news stories of the U.S. policy toward Japan. Out of the 392 articles in the 9/11 period, 58 percent had an opinion (28 percent were unfavorable, 30 percent were favorable), and 42 percent were neutral. Of the 425 articles in the Pearl Harbor period, 41 percent were opinionated (17 percent had an unfavorable take on the administration's actions, 24 percent were positive), and 59 percent had a neutral tone. The results support the hypothesis, χ^2 (N=817) = 26.51, p<.001. As Table 1 indicates, the main difference is indeed the more prevalent self-imposed neutrality in the 1940s.

[Table 1 about here]

The second part of Hypothesis 1 postulated further that news stories of the U.S. policy toward Al Qaeda and Afghanistan cite fewer critical sources than news stories of the U.S. policy toward Japan. This hypothesis is not supported. Table 2 shows that the "unsourced" category (i.e., no source was mentioned or *New York Times* staff was the source) was the main "source" for both time periods. Of all "after 9/11" assertions, 60 percent were unsourced. As for the "after Pearl Harbor" period, 76 percent were unsourced. There were significant differences in the critical assertions made in staff-written articles, χ^2 (N=558) = 10.08, $p<.005$. However, there were no significant differences in the critical orientation of the quoted sources.

[Table 2 about here]

The second hypothesis, which predicted that news stories of U.S. policy in the 9/11 aftermath would be focused on dramatic dimensions rather than explanatory dimensions compared to stories of U.S. policy after Pearl Harbor, was supported (χ^2 (N=817) = 39.30, $p<.001$ and a V coefficient of .219, $p < .001$). We found that the articles from the earlier period focused on somewhat different aspects of the U.S. foreign policy than did those from the more recent times. It appears that the role of the *New York Times* as a news organ has adjusted to the changed media landscape. As Figure 3 indicates, the articles in 1941/42 emphasized the dangers of the war to the United States (28 percent), explanation and justification for action (28 percent), and the administration's leadership (19 percent). The articles after 9/11, on the other hand, stressed foreign and domestic opinions (22 percent), the president's leadership role (20 percent), and the need for war as the only viable reaction (16 percent). Dramatic dimensions were much more prominent after 9/11 (62 percent) than after Pearl Harbor (40 percent). Results of the analysis conducted for this second hypothesis are presented in Figure 3 and Table 3.

[Figure 3 about here] [Table 3 about here]

DISCUSSION

Overall, our results show that the *New York Times* approached the coverage of the time between enemy attack and U.S. military reaction somewhat differently for the two periods. As hypothesized, the newspaper was more opinionated (favorable or unfavorable) in the weeks following September 11 than it was during the four months after Pearl Harbor. The *New York Times* also concentrated on dramatic depictions of events during the recent crisis than it did in the 1940s despite the fact that it covered an entire world war with increasing U.S. participation in the earlier crisis. In that sense, the watchdog function appears to have been altered by reporters operating with more speculative "lenses" and "frames" that transformed them from observers to participants.

Perhaps the subject of Peer and Chestnut's (1995) research, which examined the coverage of the Gulf War between television and print media, points toward a possible reason for the changes in the *New York Times*. During World War II, newspapers were the main source of information for the public. Radio slowly entered the media news scene, and television news was in its infancy. In today's media landscape, the omnipresence of broadcast and cable TV news has relegated newspapers' importance from a source of current information to a commentator and educator on background information and associations.

Of course, the composition of the two media types naturally leads to a different approach to news. The central role of the television reporter and television's adoption of a single theme make it difficult for a television reporter to stand outside the subject of the story (Campbell, 1993). In that role, the reporter often reinforces the position of the administration. The news format of the newspapers, on the other hand, provides the time, space, and capacity to adduce additional data that elaborate on aspects of the event (Weaver, 1975).

Given that an audience is primarily interested in the live progression of the event (see, for instance, the spike in TV viewership on September 11 and 12, 2001), the slide in newspaper readership from 81 percent of adult Americans in 1964 to 54 percent in 2001 (Newspaper Association of America, 2003) might indicate newspapers' decline in prominence. In the last few years, newspapers have engaged in various activities to stem this trend. They have sought to match television's relevance by creating instant news on their own Web sites. They also appear, however, to mimic as much as possible the "thematic structure of television news" (Peer & Chestnut, 1995). It is no surprise that the subjective categories in the *New York Times* differed significantly from the neutral between 9/11 and Pearl Harbor. Likewise, the dominance of dramatic dimensions in the 9/11 coverage more closely reflects the nature of the presentation of television news than the detached coverage of events in 1941/42.

Seen by many people as the best newspaper in the world, the *New York Times* has been strongly criticized recently for depending heavily on political and governmental sources (Welch et al, 2000) or being wrong and ignorant about newsmakers and motivations behind occurrences (*The Economist*, 2001). Following these criticisms, we should expect the echoing of governmental frames by the newspaper. While it is plausible that the *New York Times*, as the elite's paper, might be guilty of abandoning skepticism toward the administration's actions at times, no differences in critical coverage between 1942 and 2001 emerged: in both instances the majority of the articles were detached and neutral. A comparison of favorable vs. unfavorable news stories actually reveals an increase in unfavorable stories, both overall (including quoted sources) and only unsourced (staff written) stories in particular. Given the more debatable nature of the counter-attack on Afghanistan, as opposed to Japan, the *New York Times* appeared to have upheld its watchdog role for the public.

What appears to have occurred, however, is a greater desertion of impartial coverage after 9/11. Jamieson and Waldman (2003) contend that "journalists' commitment to a factual portrayal of events should be no less strong when the country is threatened and that the press [should] uphold its commitment to the public by not sacrificing accuracy to what it perceives as the national mood." It appears that after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 the coverage was influenced by a greater patriotic mood, a mood that lead to less neutral and more dramatic reporting than after the Pearl Harbor attacks.

However, it must be mentioned that the U.S. government during World War II instituted what may have been the most effective system of press censorship in the nation's history by persuading journalists to censor themselves in the interest of the nation (Sweeney, 2001). This might explain the greater amount of neutral coverage and abstinence from dramatic reporting by the *New York Times* in the months following Pearl Harbor.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study is another attempt to clarify the complex relationship between the mass media and governmental elites as well as the influence on newspapers of competition from other news media.

Since it does not appear that changes in the coverage of the two different events in time by the *New York Times* can be attributed to successful manipulation by governmental "spin doctors," these changes appear to be internally motivated. The success of television and Web-based media structures and presentation styles in fostering public debate could have contributed to the attempt to become more thematic and event-based in coverage. While newspapers' mode of operation still allows them to depart more from an official line, the competition may have created a situation in which newspapers made tactical decisions to change the way they report news in order to appear more competitive (Page & Shapiro, 1992).

Throughout this study, we have found support for Jamieson and Waldman's (2003) argument that stories have begun to organize facts. The instance of the *New York Times* moving along with the policy developments from the hunt for terrorists to the Afghanistan situation might indicate that reporters are less likely to search out or see facts that undercut the coherence of the story. This drive for coherence often diminishes accuracy. Compared to independent reports (Conetta, 2002), the coverage of the build-up to *Operation Enduring Freedom* suggests that even a traditionally detached news medium such as the *New York Times* might have chosen to stay with the more patriotic "America Fights Back" theme.

However, the results of this quantitative analysis must be interpreted with caution. More elaborate methods are needed to account for qualitative differences and nuances in coverage, that include source credibility, story placement, and inter-relationship with public opinion. Further research might help to determine the impact on the public agenda, the influence of media consumption habits, and the effect on presidential approval ratings. Again, whereas this research examined the portrayal of U.S. foreign policy reactions in a crisis, it did not deal with potential media-to-public effects. While the continued working of the agenda-setting hypothesis still holds, the notion that some stories can give individuals different emotional and rational cues about an issue deserves further attention.

Future research might also compare portrayals of different eras of foreign policy throughout various media. This could be done in an intra-media fashion by comparing different newspapers or in an inter-media fashion by comparing different media types, such as television and newspapers. This research might reveal how an omnipresence of news media and an accelerated diffusion of news make it easier or more difficult for the government to control its foreign policy image (Brown & Vincent, 1995). If the research is conducted longitudinally, over decades of news reporting and/or combined with reporter interviews, it might further elucidate trends and rationales for content findings.

In conclusion, this study attempted to contrast two crisis episodes in U.S. history and their effect on coverage in the country's "most important newspaper." The goal was to find whether coverage changed between the two events. Our findings suggest a subtle change in reporting from a historian and storyteller approach to a clairvoyant and event-shaper approach. Further, while accuracy might have been the victim of a self-imposed press censorship during World War II, it was sacrificed for dramatic stories after 9/11. Because newspapers are still considered the source for the best journalism, it is even more paramount that this medium sustains its role as custodian of facts, if only to prevent further inhibition on popular democracy.

Figure 1: Percent of Factual Content (Reports) critical of U.S. reaction

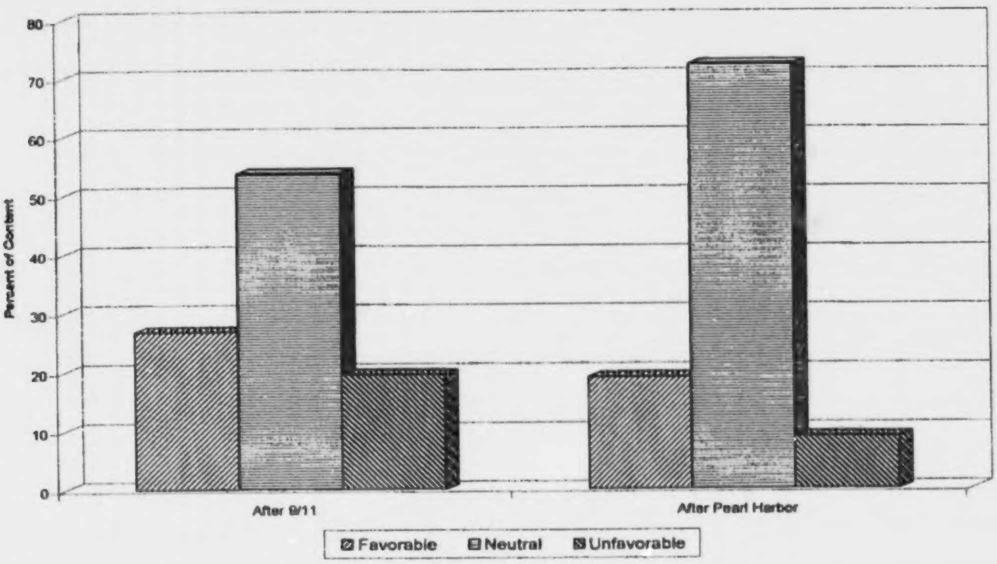

Figure 2: Percent of Editorial Content (Commentary) critical of U.S. reaction

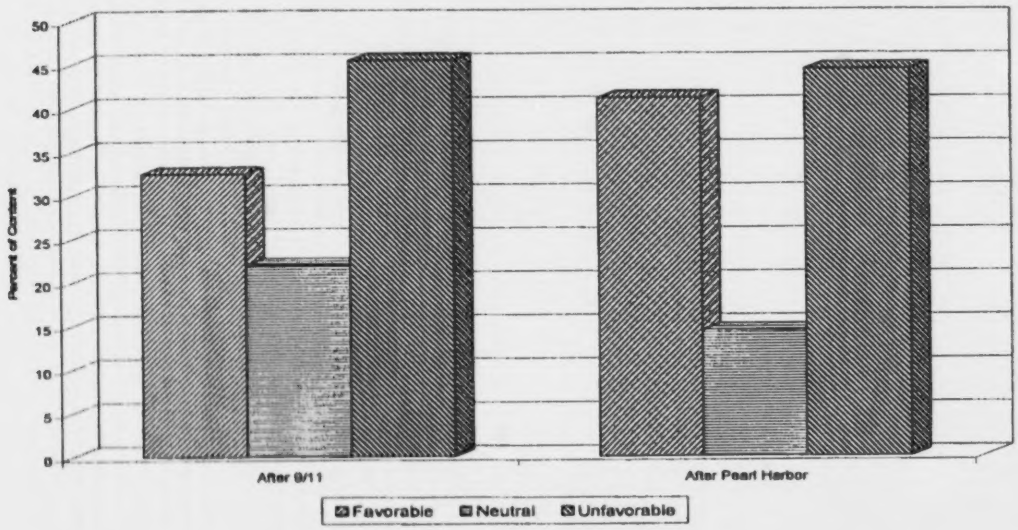

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Table 1: Disposition of news stories toward U.S. policy by time period.

Time Period	Favorable %	Neutral %	Unfavorable %	Total N
After 9/11	29.8	41.6	28.6	392
After Pearl Harbor	23.5	59.1	17.4	425
Total N	217	414	186	817
%	26.6	50.7	22.8	100

Chi-Square = 26.51, df = 2, $p < .001$

Cramer's V = .180, $p < .001$, **Kruskal's** $\lambda = .140$, $p = .006$

Table 2: Disposition of cited sources toward U.S. policy by time period.

Parameters	Favorable %	Neutral %	Unfavorable %	Total N
Unsourced[a,b]				
After 9/11	24.4	54.7	20.9	234
After P.H.	20.4	67.0	12.7	324
Total N	123	345	90	558
%	22.0	61.8	16.1	100
Cited Source[c,d]				
After 9/11	38.0	22.2	39.9	158
After P.H.	36.3	26.6	32.7	101
Total N	94	69	96	259
%	36.3	26.6	37.1	100

[a] **Chi-Square (unsourced)** = 10.08, df = 2, $p < .005$

[b] **Cramer's V** = .134, $p = .006$, **Kruskal's** $\tau = .018$, $p = .007$

[c] **Chi-Square (source)** = 4.25, p = n.s.

[d] **Cramer's V** = n.s., **Kruskal's** τ = n.s.

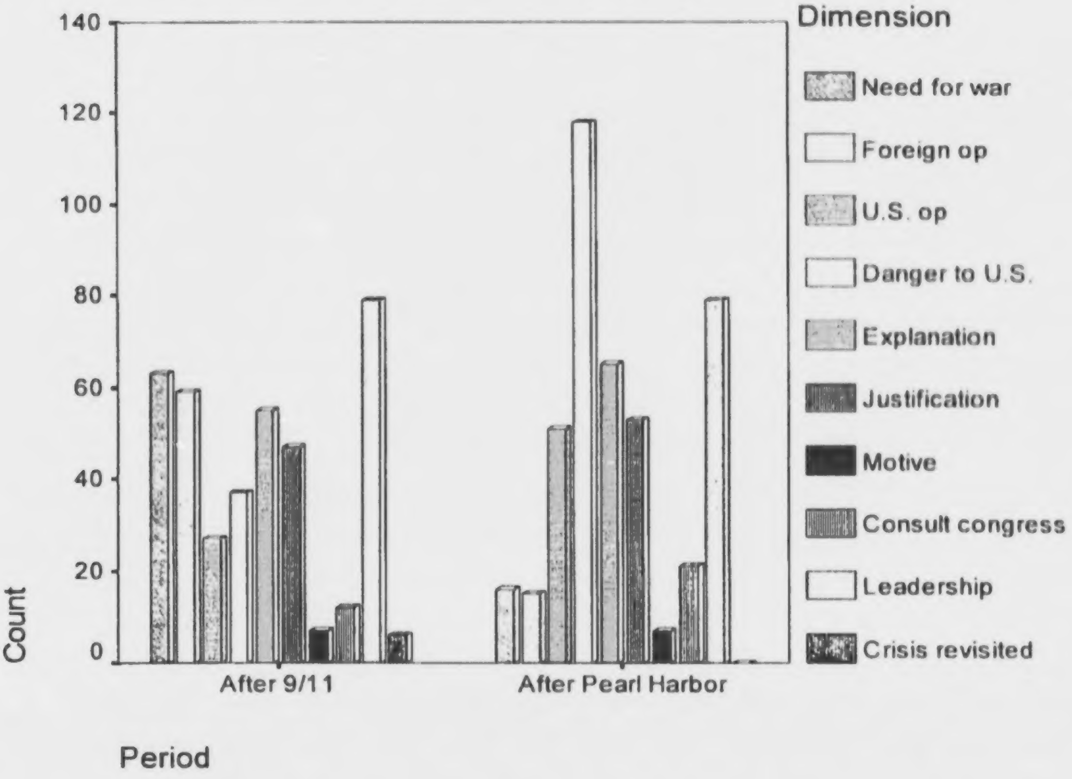
Table 3: Orientation of dimension of news stories by time period.

Time Period	Explanatory %	Dramatic %	Total N
After 9/11	38.5	61.5	392
After Pearl Harbor	60.5	39.5	425
Total N	408	409	817
%	49.9	50.1	100

Chi-Square = 39.30, df = 1, p < .001

Cramer's V = .219, p < .001, **Kruskal's λ** = .186, p < .001

Figure 3: Most cited dimensions of U.S. reaction by time period.



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No Substitute for Being There: How statewide public affairs television tries to fill the gap for journalists

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No Substitute for Being There: How statewide public affairs television tries to fill the gap for journalists

Abstract (75 words)

Research has documented the diminishing resources traditional media devote to coverage of state government, while, at the same time, state government has grown increasingly complex. That places statehouse reporters across the country in the position of having to do more with less. Now a potential new tool has emerged for reporters in the form of statewide public affairs television. This comparative case study examines what use reporters are making of statewide public affairs television and what effect that has had on state government coverage.

Introduction

As newspapers and television stations across the country continue to cut staff, news space, and other resources, one of the biggest casualties has been statehouse coverage.

This trend has been amply demonstrated by the *American Journalism Review's* Project on the State of the American Newspaper (Layton & Dorroh, 2002; Layton & Walton, 1998). In 1998, the first year the Project surveyed statehouse coverage, the number of full-time reporters assigned to cover state government totaled 513. In June 2002, that number was down to 510. Although the difference is seemingly small, Layton and Dorroh (2002) described it as the lowest number in probably a quarter-century.

Why does this matter? It's important because, at the same time, more and more power has shifted from the federal government to the states. Policies and laws that most affect the public are increasingly being determined at the state level (Ehrenhalt, 1999; Garand, 1988; Gurwitt, 1996; Gurwitt; 1990; Jewell, 1982; Layton & Dorroh, 2002; Layton & Walton, 1998).

That means the media can't afford to ignore statehouse coverage completely if they are to fulfill their civic obligation to fully inform the public about the day's events. Common sense would suggest, therefore, that they have to get their information from somewhere else. Traditionally, wire services have filled that role, while more recently, politicians and interest groups have been happy to step into the vacuum.

There is, however, another information source that has developed in several states. Statewide public affairs television, which provides various degrees of coverage of state government, has developed in 18 states over the past decade, and at least two more states are in the process of establishing such systems.

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This comparative case study proposes to look at what effect, if any, access to this coverage has had on how statehouse reporters cover state government. Since statewide public affairs television is a relatively new phenomenon, virtually no research has been conducted on it or its impact on reporting norms and routines. It would seem to be an area ready for investigation.

Literature Review

Statehouse reporting is in decline. Once home to a cozy fraternity of veteran reporters who sometimes knew more about state government and how it operated than the politicians they covered, the vaunted statehouse press corps is dwindling rapidly. Beginning in the early 1990s, Layton and Walton (1998) found, television stations and newspapers around the country began cutting back on their state government coverage — capital bureaus were reduced, if not closed altogether; the news hole allocated for government news shrank in numerous cases; and the use of wire service stories increased.

Chief among the reasons for this have been two factors — cost containment and lack of interest in state government news among editors, publishers, and news directors (Hirsch & Thompson, 1994; Layton & Walton, 1998).

In terms of cost containment, the media have to work much harder in today's economy to remain as profitable as management and shareholders wish. The ever-increasing expenses of technology, labor, and, in the case of newspapers, old-fashioned paper and ink, have many publishers and general managers scrambling to find areas where they can cut, and chief among their targets have been their state capital bureaus (Gurwitt, 1996; Hickey, 1998; Kaniss, 1991; Layton & Walton, 1998; McChesney, 2000; McManus, 1994). At the same time, many of these media companies are publicly traded, and their management must contend with boards of directors and shareholders who demand a certain profitability. Traditionally, if that goal has not been met, Wall Street has been swift to punish the offending company via lower stock prices (Hirsch & Thompson, 1994). The response has been to cut costs as much as possible in order to keep profits at an acceptable level (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002). This increasing pressure for profits has been exacerbated, as well, Champlin and Knoedler say, by the massive consolidation of the media, particularly throughout the 1990s. They point out as well that this pressure to control costs has led newsrooms to rely heavily on pre-packaged news, such as that generated by press conferences and press releases, while giving investigative reporting efforts short shrift (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002).

Further compounding the problem is the lack of interest many editors and news directors have in state government news (Layton & Walton, 1998; McManus 1994). Typically, government news has been categorized as dull-but-important, and the persistent belief among editors and news directors has been that readers just aren't interested in these types of stories — despite research that shows that isn't the case (Gurwitt, 1996; Layton & Walton, 1998; Poindexter & McCombs, 2001). Poindexter and McCombs, for instance, found a clear relationship between those who believed they needed to keep informed and their use of newspapers and TV news to do so.

There is another factor at work, too, in the media's move away from the intense government coverage that was common in the past, as McManus (1994) observes. He believes that market forces are driving the change. Media management decisions are based on the needs of four different audiences, McManus says, investor/owners, advertisers, sources, and consumer/readers. The most powerful of these, the investor/owners, play the primary role in determining how newspapers and television stations are managed and what news gets covered (McManus, 1994, p. 32).

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What gets covered, in turn, is what management believes readers will read and viewers will watch. In practice that has meant moving away from the traditional coverage of government and politics, which was seen as "too serious, sanctimonious, and often just plain boring," (McManus, 1994, p. 2) and toward writing about "whatever is interesting" (p. 7).

What has been the practical effect of all this? "In capital press rooms around the country, there are more and more empty desks and silent phones. Bureaus are shrinking, reporters are younger and less experienced, stories get less space and poorer play, and all too frequently editors just don't care" (Layton & Walton, 1998, p. 44).

Fewer reporters mean fewer stories, as Layton and Walton point out. As well, less experienced reporters mean less knowledge of how the governmental process works, who the players are, and how a given issue might affect the public. That, in turn, calls into question how well the public is being served by the information it's getting from the media.

The Business of State Government: The question of how well the public is being informed is a concern because state government is big business. In the 1990s, it ranked eighth on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' list of national growth industries (Layton & Walton, 1998). Layton and Walton also estimated that, in total, the states spend $854 billion a year — about $9,000 for every American. More importantly, for some time now, state government has been leading the charge on all sorts of issues that affect people's daily lives, not Congress (Layton & Walton, 1998).

Historically, the political communications literature has centered on the federal process. Rosenthal (1981) observed that "despite the importance of the function, relatively little is known about how policy making is performed by legislatures in the states" (p. 256). Garand (1988), in his study of the growth of state government from 1945-1984, found that "to date, the states have been virtually ignored as a focus of research on government growth" (p. 838).

Some 20 years ago, Rosenthal (1981) and Jewell (1982) wrote about how policy development responsibility was being shifted from the federal to the state level. Since then, the states have taken the lead on issues as diverse as welfare and Medicaid policy, gun control and education. Reforms in areas as diverse as health care, and no fault divorce and automobile insurance laws all started at the state level (Ehrenhalt, 1999; Gurwitt, 1996; Jewell, 1982; Layton & Walton, 1998; Rosenthal, 1981).

It's a devolution of power and policy-making that shows no sign of abating (Elazar, 1994; Gurwitt, 1996). Layton and Walton (1998) pointed out that state legislatures consider approximately 185,000 bills each year and pass about 25 percent of them. "And all of it – the money, the bills, the lobbyists, the elections, the bureaucrats – is covered by a diminishing number of reporters" (Layton & Walton, 1998, p. 47).

Who's Watching: The changing face of media capital bureaus has not gone unnoticed by those they cover, either. As long ago as 1990, Gurwitt highlighted the increasingly younger and inexperienced reporters being sent to cover state capitals. Prior to Watergate, in particular, many reporters made whole careers out of covering statehouses. While Gurwitt (1990) and Ehrenhalt (1999) acknowledged that perhaps it was not a bad thing that the coziness that had prevailed in earlier days between legislators and reporters was gone, they also bemoaned the lack of expertise that now exists. "… state government is more complicated today than it was 30 years ago. Budgets are far larger, the number of state agencies and departments has mushroomed, the complexity of the issues that state governments now tackle has grown immeasurably. The question is, as reporters lose the

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intimate familiarity with legislatures that they once had, how well are they keeping up with the changes?" (Gurwitt, 1990, para. 31).

The answer is, not very well, say mass communication researchers and the media trade journals (Coulson, Riffe, Lacy, & St. Cyr, 2001; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Hickey, 1998; Layton & Dorroh, 2002; Layton & Walton, 1998; McChesney, 2000). Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) add that, without adequate information, the public loses one more way to evaluate whether the work being done by government reflects its interests.

Is the Public Interested?: Political science and mass communication researchers disagree over whether the public really cares about governmental processes and, by extension, about news coverage of those processes. Numerous studies have tracked the declining rate of voter turnout, the lack of civic participation, and the limited knowledge of current affairs among the public (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Jeffres, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 2002; Rosenthal, 1999; Scheufele, Shanahan, & Kim, 2002; Tewksbury, Weaver, & Maddex, 2001).

Rosenthal (1999) argued that since making laws is one of the principal jobs of legislatures, the public must be able to examine how well its legislators are performing that task. To make that judgment, the public must have the information it needs.

Jeffres, Atkin, and Neuendorf (2002) reported that their study of political involvement at the community level showed media can, and do, play a positive role in community politics. "Those most likely to rely on neighborhood newspapers as sources," they said, "are less disillusioned with government" (p. 387).

Alternative Information Sources: There is no shortage of sources available to help today's overworked, understaffed, inexperienced capital bureaus, however. Governors' press offices, state agency public information officers, public relations firms, lobbyists, and corporations, among others, all have the means and the desire to disseminate information, albeit with their own spin.

Now another source of information on state government has developed — at least in some states — via the creation of statewide public affairs television. These entities, which can best be described as smaller versions of the national cable public affairs network C-SPAN — although they have no formal affiliation with it — cover state legislatures, legislative committees, and regional issues to varying degrees. There are 18 such television services in operation now, with at least two more in developmental stages.

Located predominantly in the Northeast, Midwest, and West, these entities are as varied in their programming as in their funding mechanisms. Some are state-run, others are run by the cable industry, and still others are run by private groups. In terms of programming, some operate year-round, others only when the legislature is in session. Some provide gavel-to-gavel coverage of legislative sessions, others cover state House and Senate committee hearings, and still others offer public affairs programs beyond the legislative coverage. A few of them also provide programming that allows viewer interaction.

The Theories: Mass communication researchers have argued for decades that the production of news is very much a function of set routines dependent on official channels of information (Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1980; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Kaniss, 1991; McChesney, 2000; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978, among others). That is, Shoemaker and Reese write, media organizations are set up to provide their audiences with the most acceptable product in the most efficient manner, given the time and space constraints under which they work.

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To do that, the media have developed a specific set of routines that allows them to send reporters out to those sources where information is plentiful and easily accessible. Those sources typically have been government-related — politicians, legislators, state agencies and departments, state and local officials, and so forth.

Tuchman (1978) likens the reporting process to the casting of a net, but adds that the net will only gather information in those areas where it is cast and that the holes in the net vary in size, thereby limiting what gets caught. In particular, she argues, reporters, editors, and news directors have a tendency not to stray from well-established patterns and sources when it comes to gathering news.

The news that is produced, therefore, does not really reflect society as much as it reflects the view of those in charge. It requires a conscious effort to look beyond the readily available to find information sources outside the norm (Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978).

Fishman (1980) goes further, maintaining that "news is the result of the methods newsworkers employ" (p. 14). He argues that through their work routines, reporters do more than selectively report the news; they, in effect, *create* the news. The concern, of course, is that it is generally a creation of news as projected by the existing power authority. What the public sees is a view of the world as the government bureaucracy wishes it to be seen.

Kaniss (1991), too, points out that journalists work under a set of "Standard Operating Procedures," that allows them "to internalize certain professional values that guide them in their search for news and in the way they package what they find. These standard operating procedures both assure that the journalist will be able to fill the newshole each day and that he or she will fill it efficiently" (p. 73).

She concludes, "The reliance on eager official sources for information, the lack of quantitative expertise, the need for sexy angles to stories, and the fragmented beat structure of metropolitan newspapers all combine to prevent journalists from presenting the public with a balanced presentation of the pros and cons of new policy initiatives" (Kaniss, 1991, p. 100).

For television reporters, Kaniss says, the situation is even more pronounced. " … the need for effective video and sound bites and for drama and emotion leads to a distortion of some news and, in general, to the de-emphasis of governmental news in favor of crime, fires, accidents, and disasters. When local television does cover government, it is often the sexier government stories or the more humanistic angles of government plans that are reported, frequently at the expense of more important information" (1991, p. 132).

Kaniss was talking specifically about media coverage of local governmental issues, but her conclusions just as aptly describe the problem with media coverage of state government.

Not surprisingly, these well-entrenched work routines have led to criticism that the media — and newspapers, in particular — frame the news primarily in terms of how the elite or the powerful or those with disproportionate access to the press see it, thereby leaving out the views of those not in the mainstream. Tuchman (1978) puts it more succinctly: "Clearly, whom one asks for information influences what information one receives. … That people with power serve as sources bears consequences for the information newsworkers uncover …" (p. 81).

There is another potential concern with the advent of the statewide public affairs television. Mass communication research has demonstrated time and again that it is not just how information is presented that determines what message readers receive, but who controls the flow of information in the first place (Berkowitz, 1990; Clayman & Reisner, 1998; Reese & Ballinger, 2001; Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001; Smith, Tumlin, & Henning, 1988; White, 1950). This is the gatekeeper theory, first brought to the fore by David Manning White in 1950 with his study of "Mr. Gates."

Basically, White argued that only a fraction of the information available to newspapers is actually put into print and then only after it has been filtered through the subjective thought processes of an editor or editors. Subsequent studies (Berkowitz, 1990; Clayman & Reisner, 1998; Reese & Ballinger, 2001; Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001; Smith, Tumlin, & Henning, 1988, among them) have expanded on the gatekeeper theory, finding that even more than the subjectivity of the editors, news directors, and reporters, it is the routines of newsgathering that determine which information gets through the gates and into the paper or on television.

The gatekeeper issue also comes into play with statewide public affairs television because the information being sent out is not controlled by the traditional media. Reporters, of course, have the option not to use the channels or to question the information that is provided, but with the ever-increasing pressures presented by understaffing, shrinking news holes and inexperience, it's reasonable to question whether they will.

The Research Questions: The goal of this case study is to find out how access to statewide public affairs television is changing reporters' coverage of state government. It will attempt to address these questions:

> **RQ1: How relevant is statewide public affairs television to the reporters who cover state government?**
>
> **RQ2: What changes have occurred in reporters' newsgathering routines as a result of access to statewide public affairs television?**

RQ3: Has use of statewide public affairs television affected the types of stories statehouse reporters actually cover?

RQ4: Does the structure of each state's public affairs television entity — specifically, its format and programming — alter how it is used by reporters?

Methodology

This project was a multi-faceted qualitative analysis, combining comparative case study with in-depth, or long, interviews and ethnographic observation. There are many advantages to using a qualitative approach in conducting a project. Among them, McCracken (1988) says, is that "… qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it. It is, in other words, much more intensive than extensive in its objectives" (p. 17).

Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin (1993) describe the case study approach as one that takes an in-depth look at the cases under consideration using various means — interviews, participant observation, and field studies, for example. The case study's strong suit, they argue, is that "it has proven to be a powerful descriptive study" (p. 33). Case studies, too, offer the chance to examine a larger community while focusing on a few representative examples. Stake (2000) observes that the case study method is a way in which "a researcher may jointly study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition … They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (p. 437).

Ragin (1987) and Burawoy et al. (1991) also argue in favor of case studies, pointing out that they are relevant for interpreting historical or culturally significant phenomena or

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advancing theory. Ragin (1987), in particular, makes the case for the comparative case study method, on which this project is based, adding that those researchers "who use case-oriented strategies often want to understand or interpret specific cases because of their intrinsic value" (p.35).

In-depth interviews — also referred to as long or active interviews — form another component of this project. McCracken (1988) describes the long interview as "a sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive interview process that seeks to diminish the indeterminacy and redundancy that attends more unstructured research processes" (p. 7). Bellah et al. found interviews to be a crucial element in their work, as well, arguing that "active interviews create the possibility of public conversation and argument. When data from such interviews are well presented, they stimulate the reader to enter the conversation, to argue with what is being said" (1996, p. 305). Fontana and Frey (2000) point to the flexibility of the interview method, observing that interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on the nature of the data sought.

The study also involved ethnographic observation. In their book *Ethnography Unbound,* Burawoy et al. (1991) used participant observation — ethnography — extensively. The advantage of this approach, they say, is that it allows researchers not just to observe how people act, but to find out "how they understand and experience those acts. It enables (researchers) to juxtapose what people say they are up to against what they actually do" (p. 2).

The statehouse press corps in five states formed the basis for this study. Those states and their public affairs television services were the California Channel, Sacramento, California; the Florida Channel, Tallahassee, Florida; House Television Services and

Senate Media Services, St. Paul, Minnesota; the Pennsylvania Cable Network, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and TVW, Olympia, Washington.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a number of journalists in each state using the same set of open-ended questions. In deciding which journalists to interview, their experience, their position and the location of their newspaper were all taken into consideration. The goal was to interview journalists representing a cross-section. In all, 30 newspaper and broadcast journalists were interviewed out of the more than 200 interviews conducted for the project as a whole.

The interview protocol was designed primarily to make certain the same ground was covered in each interview, but the respondents were encouraged to answer the questions in any way they saw fit. Such a method was expected to — and in fact did — yield a richness of information that was then examined for common patterns.

Findings

How Relevant is Statewide Public Affairs Television to the Reporters Who Cover State Government?: For the majority of reporters interviewed for this project, these public affairs television entities have become an important tool in their efforts to cover increasingly complex state governments. Primarily they use these services for monitoring purposes, and often that monitoring takes place while they're writing another story or waiting for phone calls to be returned. Depending on the state, they can monitor House and Senate floor debates, as well as legislative committee hearings, press conferences, and state Supreme Court arguments. In short, many of them said, access to statewide public affairs television allows them to multi-task.

The reporters also use the television services as a way to cover events that they can't physically be present for or to cover something that breaks unexpectedly in a committee

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hearing or legislative floor debate. Conrad DeFiebre, a longtime reporter for the Minneapolis Star Tribune, pointed out that "government is a slow-moving, ponderous kind of thing and there's a lot of stuff we don't really care about. So you can be working on other things here … kind of monitoring out of the side of one ear on the TV and when good stuff happens, we can either watch it down here or run upstairs."

For television reporters, the feeds are an important source of sound bites and are frequently clearer than what they might obtain on their own from a hearing room or a legislative chamber. Kerri Miller of KARE11, the NBC affiliate in Minneapolis-St. Paul, said she often stays down in her office to use the feed.

"It enables me to be more than one person. Often I'll split it up. If it's going to be a big dramatic floor debate … my photographer will go up to the gallery and I'll join him there and we'll watch the dynamics of what's going on on the House floor from there because I'm not going to get that on the feed. But if I just want sound of the debate, I will sit down here and roll on the debate and time-code … it's a really good mix."

Further, in those states where statewide public affairs television provides access to archives, the reporters use those as well. In Washington State, particularly, the reporters said they made extensive use of TVW's archives both to catch up on something they might have missed and for background purposes for a story. Television reporters also use available archives for file footage for their stories. In Pennsylvania, in contrast, PCN has no archives, but the reporters there pointed out that the channel frequently reruns its coverage of various sessions or hearings, and they can pick up on something they missed that way. In fact, some of them added that they will watch the rerun of an event they attended as a way of double-checking their quotes or making sure they understand what actually happened.

Reporters also cited another use for the television services feeds. In some instances, they said, the feed helps them identify specific legislators who are speaking during a floor debate or a committee hearing — something that isn't always possible when they just listen to proceedings via the old-fashioned squawk boxes or the Internet.

What Changes Have Occurred in Reporters' Newsgathering Routines as a Result of Access to Statewide Public Affairs Television?: The access has, in fact, caused some subtle changes in the reporters' routines. Many of those interviewed acknowledged that they attend fewer legislative floor sessions and committee hearings, opting instead to monitor the proceedings from their offices. Part of that has to do with logistics — press corps offices in Washington, California, and Florida, for instance are outside their respective state capitol buildings — and some of it has to do with the changing philosophy of the media. Specifically, there is more emphasis in stories on long-term trends and the impact of bills on people than on the actual legislative process. It is still necessary for reporters to keep track of the progress of various bills, however, and these public affairs television entities are one more way to do that.

When asked whether they ever take notes from the television coverage and write their stories that way, several of the reporters said they did, which is a distinct change from traditional reporting practice. Traditionally, it was understood that a reporter actually needed to be present at an event to take notes for a story or at most he or she would talk to a source over the phone — the point being that actual contact was made.

Further, for some of the print reporters, the development of these public affairs television entities has altered the typically anonymous personas they had previously maintained. Some of these television services offer public affairs programming in addition to their gavel-to-gavel coverage of floor sessions and committee hearings.

Journalists' round tables are not uncommon. The shows give reporters a chance to offer their opinions on various topics, but those who participate admitted that they were taken aback at being recognized in public after the shows aired. It's a noticeable change for print reporters, and there were mixed feelings about whether it was a change for the better.

Nor did all of the reporters interviewed take part in these round tables. Those who did not gave a couple of reasons for their refusal — they weren't comfortable being in the public eye in that way and they didn't think it was appropriate for reporters who cover state government to turn around and give opinions about it.

Has Use of Statewide Public Affairs Television Affected the Types of Stories Reporters Actually Cover?: The findings here were unclear. The reporters interviewed were hesitant about answering this question. Most said they really didn't know of any changes that had taken place in what they covered as a result of using the public affairs television feed. They added that if there were any changes, they would more likely be due to changes in their papers' ideas about what kinds of stories they should write. It's a question that bears further investigation, however, and a traditional content analysis would seem to be a more effective way to go about it.

Does the Structure of Each State's Public Affairs Television Entity — Specifically, Its Format and Programming — Alter How It is Used by Reporters?: There was no question that the format and programming of the television services played a large role both in how much and how often they were used by statehouse reporters. In California, for instance, where the California Channel's programming day ends at 3:30 p.m., reporters expressed frustration that frequently the feed would end in the middle of a session or hearing they were following.

In Minnesota, the House and Senate television services programming day generally ends at 5 p.m., and reporters there had the same complaint. Further, while the Minnesota reporters had access to multiple feeds within the state capitol, outside the capitol they were limited to the channel provided for the general public.

On the other hand, TVW in Washington and PCN in Pennsylvania both offer 24-hour-a-day programming. Therefore, if hearings or floor debates run late, reporters have the option of leaving for the night and keeping tabs on things from home. Many of them said they can and do take advantage of that. Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Mario Cattabiani summed up the general feeling. "I can be done with my story and still go home and monitor it. I don't have to be physically in this building … and if something breaks, I can cover it from home."

Access to archives is another important feature of some of these public affairs television entities. Where the archives are easily accessible — TVW in Washington, for instance — reporters make frequent use of them. "I was working on a story related to British Columbia and their budget," said Ralph Thomas of the Seattle Times. "The premier of British Columbia spoke at some event six months ago, and TVW happened to cover it. It was great because I could go back and listen to the whole speech."

Overall, it was clear that format and programming had a substantial impact on how and how much these reporters used the television services feed.

Discussion

What emerged most clearly in interviewing statehouse reporters for this project is that they consider statewide public affairs television — in whatever format it's available — to be just another tool for doing their jobs. At first blush, these television entities seem not to have changed reporting routines so much as they have become an integral part of those

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routines. Certainly the routines as articulated by Tuchman, Gans, Fishman, and others have not been altered. The reporters interviewed for this project still spend the bulk of their time tracking down their news from official sources. What happens in the capitol is news — albeit an official version of the news. The development of statewide public affairs television has not altered that. In fact, it could be argued that public affairs television has reinforced that.

A closer look, however, reveals some subtle changes in routines. Many of the reporters acknowledge, for instance, that they don't spend as much time going to chamber floors for debates or going to committee hearings in person. Although they concede that watching the proceedings on television is not entirely the same as being there, they also point out the benefits. They are able to keep track of more than one story at a time, they can write one story while listening to a debate on another, which is an advantage when working on deadline, and they can follow the progress of a bill over time without wasting time sitting in hearings that won't yield a story, which fits with the changing philosophy many newspapers have adopted when it comes to legislative coverage. That is, they are less interested in the technical processes of making legislation and more interested in the impact that legislation will actually have on people.

The television services also provide reporters with a fairly convenient way of double-checking themselves, if they wish, in that they can go back and review the taped coverage of an event they were at to see if they missed anything. Without access to the feeds, that double-checking becomes a more cumbersome task and one most reporters don't have time for.

Further, in those states where the public affairs television coverage is on 24 hours a day, the reporters have a way to shorten their workdays if they wish. When legislative sessions run late into the night, the reporters can file their stories, go home, and monitor the proceedings there. It's a change that many said they welcomed and take advantage of.

For virtually all of the reporters interviewed, access to public affairs television has become a way to stretch diminishing or stagnant resources by allowing them to multi-task. This is especially the case in those capitol bureaus where a single reporter is responsible for covering state government for his or her paper.

Another of the concerns raised about use of statewide public affairs television is one of control — the gatekeeping. It is true that the media don't control the signals emanating from these television services nor do they make the decisions on what floor debates or committee hearings get covered. Still most of the reporters said they found that the coverage choices made by the television services staff generally reflected what were considered the most important topics. Occasionally, they said, they disagreed on the decision to cover a specific hearing, but they found that to be more of a minor annoyance rather than a serious problem.

Further, while reporters have no control over the camera angles used for the feeds, it is also the case that they can't choose their sight lines when they're on the chamber floor or in a committee hearing room because the media are confined to one spot — they can't wander. In that sense, little has changed. In addition, with the gavel-to-gavel coverage, the media are generally getting an unedited, unfiltered feed, which would be the same thing they would see if they were actually present. There is the question, however, of how well reporters are able to pick up on the nuances of debate when they're watching something on the television. Some say there is a difference; others maintain that if a reporter is truly tuned in to what's going on, it's not a problem.

Given the findings of the American Journalism Review study, it was reasonable to ask whether statewide public affairs television has become a substitute for the actual presence of reporters when it comes to covering state government. The answer seems to be that it is not a substitute, but a crutch, as one reporter termed it, to help expand dwindling coverage resources.

Statewide public affairs television is not a perfect answer to the problems of declining media coverage of state government, and there are some problems with its execution. Nevertheless, it would be more of a problem for the media if it went away.

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The Convergence Continuum: A Model for Studying Collaboration Between Media Newsrooms

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Abstract

This paper offers a conceptual framework for filling a void in the research on convergence and for extending research into gatekeeping and diffusion of innovation. It offers the Convergence Continuum as a dynamic model that defines news convergence as a series of behavior-based activities illustrating the interaction and cooperation levels of staff members at newspapers, television stations, and Web organizations with news partnerships. The continuum's components provide media professionals with a touchstone as they develop cross-media alliances.

The Convergence Continuum: A Model for Studying Collaboration Between Media Newsrooms

A standardized definition of news convergence remains elusive even as buzz about the term increases among media scholars and industry professionals. A debate often occurs between those people who see convergence simply as a technological development driven by newly available digital tools and others who say convergence must be defined in terms of fundamental changes in storytelling. This convergence identity crisis hasn't stopped newspapers, broadcasters, and online groups from rushing to develop multimedia staffs to produce what they call converged content, or universities from modifying their curricula to include convergence training.[1] Ulrik Haagerup, an award-winning newspaper journalist and innovator from Denmark, outlined the definition problem succinctly at a 2002 conference in South Carolina where news professionals from around the world struggled unsuccessfully to reach consensus on a single, behavior-based definition of convergence. "Media convergence is like teenage sex," Haagerup said. "Everybody thinks everybody else is doing it. The few who are actually doing it aren't very good at it."[2]

The definition of convergence is evolving within a media landscape where competing newspapers and television stations form alliances to meet a variety of technological, editorial, regulatory, and market-based opportunities and challenges. The partnerships, some of which have existed for several years, were created as digital technology allowed journalists to produce

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[1] David Bulla, "Media Convergence: Industry Practices and Implications for Education," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual convention, Miami, Fla., August 2002; Scott C. Hammond, Daniel Petersen, and Steven Thomsen, "Print, Broadcast, and Online Convergence in the Newsroom," *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 55 (Summer 2000): 16.

[2] Ulrik, Haagerup, "Convergence and the Newsroom Culture," speech presented at Defining Convergence: 3rd International Ifra Summit on Newsrooms, Columbia, S.C., 14 November 2002.

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news across several multimedia platforms at increasing speed. The relationships became more attractive as declining or flat circulation numbers forced newspapers to look for new ways to market their product to the younger audiences television news sometimes attracts,[3] and budget cuts at many television stations required news directors to push staff productivity to the limits.

As those partnerships grew, they drew the attention of academics and professionals. Both groups have conducted seminars on convergence, researched operations that have adopted convergence efforts and written articles in trade publications. Schools have revised their curricula to address journalism education across media platforms.[4] Yet two problems remain: Lack of a common, behavior-based definition of convergence and lack of a common instrument for measuring convergence efforts. Without that definition and instrument, scholars cannot build a research stream that allows comparison of results, and professionals cannot make informed decisions on how to do their jobs better. In the structural-functional tradition of Laswell, White, and Breed, this paper offers the Convergence Continuum as a heuristic for studying convergence in a number of media-related research areas. As such, it makes no attempt to quantify any convergence efforts or any of the theories and concepts that inform the efforts. Rather it is an attempt to develop the conceptual and empirical tools needed to conduct such studies.

Using the current cross-media alliances as a framework, this paper will:

- Define convergence by placing it on a dynamic continuum that contains the overlapping levels of cross promotion, cloning, coopetition, content sharing, and true convergence.
- Explain how the continuum fills a void in the current research on convergence.

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[3] Craig Johnston, *TV Newsroom Shares Web Site Workload* [Web Page] (October 2000, accessed March 25, 2002); available from "http://www.rtnda.org/technology/share.shtml

[4] Consider these numbers: The Poynter Institute Web site lists 130 articles that mention convergence; here are the number of results for searches for the word convergence in articles since 1997 in five leading trade publications magazines: *American Journalism Review*, 19; *Columbia Journalism Review*, 30; *Editor and Publisher*, more than 200; *American Editor*, 31; and *Broadcasting and Cable*, 114, although some of those address technical issues of media convergence rather than news operations.

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- Outline the continuum's potential application to communication theories, such as gatekeeping and innovation diffusion.
- Provide a model through which media professionals can assess their own convergence efforts.
- Identify a strategy for how the continuum can be used in future research to provide a greater understanding of the promise convergence holds.

This model is offered in the spirit of Breed's statement: "That to me is one of the great questions of scholarship: How does it work?"[5]

The Convergence Continuum Model

The literature shows that scholars and practitioners are struggling to define convergence even as news partnerships increase among newspapers, broadcasters, and online organizations.[6] Lack of a precise definition poses problems for researchers trying to study how communication theories such as gatekeeping and innovation diffusion apply to new media. The void also creates difficulties for professionals developing converged news operations. This paper starts with the assumption that convergence is characterized by some degree of interaction and cooperation among cross-media partners, whether the media are owned by common or separate companies. It further proposes a common standard of measurement – the Convergence Continuum Model – and offers operational definitions of the various levels on that model.

The Continuum

The Convergence Continuum (See Figure 1) provides a conceptual framework for understanding convergence by identifying five levels of activity among news organizations. The levels – the 5Cs of convergence – are cross promotion, cloning, coopetition, content sharing, and

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[5] Stephen D. Reese and Jane Ballinger, "The Roots of a Sociology of News: Remembering Mr. Gates and Social Control in the Newsroom," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 78 (winter 2000): 650.

[6] For example, media representatives from around the world spent two days discussing the topic at a conference titled "Defining Convergence" in Columbia, S.C. in November 2002. The conference was sponsored by Ifra, in conjunction with the opening of its Newsplex at the University of South Carolina.

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full convergence. Their placement on a continuum provides the flexibility researchers need to identify and measure the varying degrees of cooperation and interaction demonstrated by each organization's staff members as they work with their partners to develop and promote news stories. Five circles on the continuum illustrate that each position is characterized by a range of behaviors that can overlap as the degree of interaction and cooperation activities increases. The arrows on the continuum show that a partner's place on the model is not fixed; it can move back and forth depending on the nature of the news and the commitment to convergence by workers and managers. For example, partners might demonstrate a greater degree of interaction and cooperation on a special project – such as election coverage – but exhibit lesser degrees of interaction and cooperation during the average news day.

At the left end of the continuum is the *cross-promotion* level in which the least amount of cooperation and interaction occur among members of the different news organizations. At this level, the media outlets promote the content of their partners through the use of words or visual elements. A newspaper, for example, might place a television station's logo within an article, or a television news anchor might direct viewers to the newspaper or a common Web site for more information on a story. The outlets do not work together to produce content.

To the right of cross-promotion is *cloning*,[7] a practice in which one partner republishes the other partner's product with little editing (e.g. content from a newspaper is displayed on a TV partner's Web site or jointly owned Web portal). News outlets at the cloning level do not discuss their news-gathering plans and share content only after a story has been completed.

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[7] The activities here resemble biological cloning in which a virtual copy of the original is made with no regard to the fact the two exist in different environments.

In the center of the continuum is *coopetition*, the stage at which news outlets both cooperate and compete.[8] At this level, the staff members of separate media outlets promote and share information about some stories on which they are working. One entity also might produce some content for its partner, but at this level, years of competition and cultural differences combine to create mutual distrust that limits the degree of cooperation and interaction. For example, a newspaper reporter might appear as an expert or commentator on a television station's newscast to discuss a current issue, but the two staffs are careful not to divulge any information that might be exclusive to their news products.

The fourth stop on the model is *content sharing*, the level at which a media outlet regularly (but not always) shares information gathered by its cross-media partner and publishes it after it has been repackaged by the organization's staff members. The partners also might share news budgets or attend the other partner's planning sessions. Collaboration on a special, investigative or enterprise piece is possible. In general, however, the news organizations produce their own stories without helping each other.

At the right end of the model is *full convergence*, the stage in which the partners cooperate in both gathering and disseminating the news. Their common goal is to use the strengths of the different media to tell the story in the most effective way. Under full convergence, hybrid teams of journalists from the partnering organizations work together to plan, report, and produce a story, deciding along the way which parts of the story are told most effectively in print, broadcast, and digital forms.[9] The teams gather and produce content for specific projects and then disband. New teams form as additional projects present themselves.

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[8] Ray Noorda, founder of the networking software company Novell is credited with coining the word. *See* Adam M. Brandenburger and Barry J. Nalebuff, *Co-opetition* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1996; Currency Doubleday, 1997), 3, 267.

Operationalization

To test the Convergence Continuum Model, the five levels must be defined in terms of the types of behaviors expected to be performed by the staff members at the partnering news outlets. As the partnership moves right on the continuum, it continues to display all of the interaction and cooperation expected at the previous levels. To exist within the circle, at least one of the level's defined activities must be exhibited. Outlets that exhibit a preponderance of the level's activities fall at the center of the circle.[10] The overlapping nature of the circles reflects the idea that transition from one level on the continuum to the next involves some sharing of behaviors.

At the **cross-promotion** level, the news outlets:

- Visually promote their partner by publishing or broadcasting its logo on a regular basis.
- Verbally promote content appearing in their partner's product.
- Encourage audience members to sample offerings available only through their partner.
- Allow reporters or commentators from one medium to appear in the other medium to briefly promote special projects or other content.
- Use news meetings to discuss ways to discuss the partnership (e.g., ways to promote the partner's content and to display their partner's logo).

At the **cloning** level, the news outlets continue their cross-promotion activities, but also begin sharing limited content with their partners by:

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[9] For now, the most common digital medium is the Internet sites that generally are accessed from a computer. Some companies are starting to deliver that information to cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, and pagers. Future technologies probably will expand the number of devices on which this information can be received.

[10] To operationalize each stage and to provide the framework for future, in-depth quantitative and qualitative study within newsrooms, the authors relied on direct observation of the cross-media staffs at several newspapers, broadcast outlets, and Web sites; review of trade and scholarly publications; discussions with media professionals who have cross-media partnerships; and their own experience (almost 60 years combined) as journalists.

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- Republishing their partner's content (with little or no editing) in their own medium.[11]
- Posting their partner's content (with little or no editing) either on a jointly operated Web site or on their own Web site.
- Sharing a main or index page on a common Web site (portal), but maintaining separate identities within the Web site.

At the **coopetition** level, the staffs of the media outlets perform all functions of the cross-promotion and cloning levels. In addition, the coopetition stage is marked by activities that reflect the staff members' continued desire to compete against their partner. At this level, staff members' activities must reflect both cooperative and competitive characteristics:

When they are *cooperating*, staff members:

- Share information on selected stories with their news partners.
- Have newspaper reporters and columnists who are comparative experts on their beats appear on the television newscasts to more fully explain a specific story.
- Have television reporters broadcast live from a newspaper newsroom.
- Share resources, such as allowing a newspaper photographer to fly in the station's helicopter.
- Share visual content (photographs and video) if the partner's staff missed a news event.

When they are *competing*, staff members:

- Select which stories they will share with their partner rather than offer the partner the complete lineup of available stories.
- Express distrust of their partners by questioning the quality of their work.
- Use language to indicate they feel the partner gives lower priority to their content than to content created by the partner's staff members.
- Worry that working too closely with a partner could ultimately result in audience or viewer erosion.

At the **content-sharing** level, the distrust demonstrated in the coopetition level has diminished and the staff members show a greater degree of interaction and cooperation. At this level, the news outlets:

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[11] We refrain from using shovelware, a common term for such practices, because it tends to be used in a negative context. The Convergence Continuum is offered in the spirit of helping to define a phenomenon that deserves more study, not with the intention of judging the operations of any efforts.

- Meet regularly to exchange ideas.
- Provide feedback to each other on how best to cover a story.
- Continue to allow reporters to work independently on most stories.
- Plan special projects or investigations together.
- Share the cost for the special projects or investigations that might require such devices as public opinion surveys or the work of professional consultants.
- Agree to coordinate the release of results of the special projects or investigations at the same time.

Finally, at the highest level of interaction and cooperation, news outlets at the **full convergence** level:

- Have a common assignment desk or an editor/manager to allow for the sharing of the story-planning processes.
- Allow the shared manager to determine how the strengths of each medium can be used to give the most meaningful story to the audience,
- Form teams comprised of members from each outlet to cover the story and produce the final product.

The need for and potential usefulness of the Convergence Continuum is apparent on two fronts. First, despite the wealth of writing on convergence, the academic and trade literature reflects a lack of agreement on the definition of the term, measurement staff behaviors, and approaches future research should take. Second, the model can prove useful in adding richness to the existing research into such media studies areas as gatekeeping and diffusion of innovation.

Extending convergence studies

Because the Convergence Continuum provides a behavior-based model for studying newsroom content sharing, it gives researchers and practitioners the first model for measuring the amount and type of cooperation that exists between media organizations. Existing research uses newsroom convergence as a term to describe sharing behaviors, however the descriptions do not allow for the precise determination of if, or at what levels, news organizations are sharing their content or merging their news-gathering activities.

The existing literature distinguishes newsroom convergence from other, more technical forms of convergence,[12] describes the technical duties of multimedia reporters who don an "Inspector Gadget"[13] array of news-gathering equipment in an attempt to report and file stories for multiple media,[14] describes situational cooperation of specific newsrooms,[15] or describes the melding of newsroom cultures.[16] Most of the literature about convergence appears in trade magazines, journalism reviews, and online journalism sites.[17] Convergence in scholarly literature seldom is defined in a manner that allows the categorization of specific cross-media behaviors or the determination of whether an organization is practicing the act.[18] This definitional ambiguity spills into the workaday world, where professionals disagree over what to call the skills they are practicing, and journalism schools employ a variety of names – such as new media, interactive, digital, multimedia, convergence, and online – to describe media-sharing behaviors.[19]

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[12] Rich Gordon, "The Meanings of Convergence," *Medill*, (Fall/Winter 2002): 12-13.

[13] A photographer's workshop for this type of reporting is called the "Platypus Workshop." The logo for the workshop depicts a furry creature sporting a duck's bill, a flat tail, tennis shoes (presumably covering webbed feet), a still camera, headphones and a video camera. This creature apparently is ready to cover any type of news situation at in any type of location.

[14] Bulla, (accessed); Gordon, 12-13; Michael Roberts, *Let's Get Together: The Denver Post and Channel 9 Work to Turn Their Media Partnership into a Beautiful Marriage* [Web Magazine] (October 31, 2002, accessed February 26, 2003); available from http://www.westword.com/issues/2002-10-31/message.html/1/index.html.

[15] Forrest Carr, *The Tampa Model of Convergence: Seven Levels of Cooperation* [Web Page] (May 1, 2002, accessed February 25, 2003); available from http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=9731.

[16] Carr; Frank E. Jr. Fee, "New(S) Players and New(S) Values: A Test of Convergence in the Newsroom," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Miami, Fla., August 2002; Howard Finberg, "Convergence and Changing Media Corporate Culture," speech presented at the Defining Convergence: 3rd International Ifra Summit on Newsrooms, Columbia, SC., 13 November 2002; Gordon, 12-13; Scott et al.; Bill Silcock and Susan Keith, "Translating the Tower of Babel: Issues of Language and Culture in Converged Newsrooms a Pilot Study," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Miami, Fla., August 2002, 3; Gil Thelen, "Convergence Is Coming," *Quill*, July 2002, 16.

[17] Silcock and Keith, 4.

[18] Vincent F. Filak "Convergence and Conflict: Change and Intergroup Bias in the Newsroom" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 2003.

[19] Jeff South, June Nicholson, and Holly Fisher, "Cross-Training," *Quill*, July 2002, 12.

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Distinguishing the form

Although the Convergence Continuum focuses on newsroom convergence, other disciplines also are struggling to define the term. Kung, et al., in a discussion about the digital revolution's influence on communications (primarily telephone) technologies note that convergence is " a ubiquitous but loosely defined term commonly understood to denote the blurring of boundaries…"[20] The Internet and other emerging technologies have been credited with – or blamed for – blurring the traditional newsroom boundaries when mixed-media efforts are practiced both within the same ownership structure and in cross-ownership efforts. Although the blurring has undoubtedly been accelerated by the evolution of computer technologies, the idea of newsroom convergence is not entirely new. As early as 1980, Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) chair William S. Paley noted that media organizations "have been so busy defining their own turf that it has escaped some of us how much we are being drawn together by the vast revolution in 'electronification' that is changing the face of the media today."[21]

In an explanation of how journalistic boundaries are blurring, Gordon sees newsroom convergence as one of five distinct types of convergence: ownership, tactical, structural, information-gathering, and storytelling. Ownership convergence refers to the ownership of multiple content and/or distribution channels by a company. Tactical convergence is the cross-promotion and sharing of content between print and television organizations. Structural convergence defines changes in job descriptions and organizational structure when media organizations begin to merge their content. Information-gathering convergence occurs when reporters, sometimes called "backpack journalists," are expected to gather content for multiple media. Finally, storytelling convergence describes the new forms of presenting information. Gordon says the forms will evolve for each of three new digital platforms: desktop computers, portable devices, and interactive television. [22]

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[20] Lucy Kung, Anna-Martina Kröll, Begina Ripken, and Marcel Walker, "Impact of the Digital Revolution on the Media and Communication Industries," *Javnost: The Public* 6, no. 3 (1999): 29.

[21] Ithiel de Sola Pool, *Technologies of Freedom*, 1 ed. (Harvard, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), 1.

Although Gordon's model provides an overview of the many possible ways newsrooms might merge, it lacks a method for measuring the degree of cooperation occurring between the various newsrooms of participating media. The Convergence Continuum fills that need and may offer a possibility of further utility across the other, non-newsroom levels that Gordon suggests.

Multimedia convergence

Information-gathering convergence, or multimedia convergence, refers to one reporter's ability to report, write, and disseminate content across two or more media platforms. This one-does-all approach often is seen as synonymous with multimedia journalism or new media journalism.[23] In some cases, writers have suggested journalists will go into the field with a miniature, computer-based workstation that allows them to record their notes electronically, research databases, capture visual images, and write their stories.[24] In the academy, this process is described as preparing students to provide information for print, audio, video, or online media or some combination of those media. That approach to convergence is espoused on campuses at such schools as the universities of Kansas and Florida.[25] Students at those schools learn how to craft news stories for print media as well as how to edit audio and/or video files and produce databases of information At Brigham Young University, integrated media training has become more important and faculty members say students who possess skills that span across several media are more valued than those students who specialize.[26]

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[22] Gordon, 12-13.

[23] Bulla (accessed).

[24] John V. Pavlik, *Journalism and New Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 54-57.

[25] South, Nicholson, and Fisher, 10.

Situational cooperation

While the one-reporter-does-all definition is prevalent in the academy, some professionals caution against it and suggest convergence be practiced only when the situation warrants. *The Tampa Tribune's* Gil Thelen eschews the model of an all-in-one multimedia journalist, saying "You will crush ordinary mortals and get mediocrity if you ask a single person to wear all media hats." At his newspaper, workers from broadcast, print, and online newsrooms occupy separate parts of a shared building but "the three platforms cooperate fully in newsgathering and share information freely. Each is strengthened by contributions from its partners. Despite this sharing and cooperation, each medium retains its editorial independence."[27] The Tampa model divides convergence into seven levels of cooperation. Thelen says the levels outline procedures for covering different types of news during different deadline situations. They describe specific newsroom behaviors, such as how to determine when to dispatch a newspaper photographer to gather still and moving images for both television and newspaper media, or how to determine when reporters from both media should work together on enterprise stories.[28]

The Gannett Company embraces a similar approach, according to *USA Today* President and Publisher Tom Curley, who also notes that convergence efforts are especially useful for certain types of content, most notably enterprise stories. "We're emphasizing enterprise – stories that we can develop that nobody else is likely to cover – stories that are unique and special in terms of type, depth, and presentation."[29] *Chicago Tribune* editors suggest the *Tribune* and its parent, Tribune Co., may be implementing versions of the situational approach.[30]

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[26] Hammond, Petersen, and Thomsen, 19, 21.

[27] Thelen, 16.

[28] Carr, (accessed).

Cultural melding

In a simplified, but more general, model of the behaviors approach, researchers often define convergence in terms of the melding of newsroom cultures. Richmond, Va.-based Media General, for example, refers to the process as one in which news stories' creation employs the resources of more than one medium.[31] Similarly, in Denver, where the *Denver Post* and Denver's Channel 9 have a relationship, convergence describes alliances between cross-media platforms.[32] Silcock and Keith, who conducted in-depth interviews with twelve people working in converged environments, define the term in a broad – albeit botanical – framework of "cross pollination" between print, broadcast, and online operations.[33] While the exact terminology varies, other authors share the idea of a new, melded newsroom culture where give-and-take is required from the various media.[34]

The melding of newsroom cultures almost inevitably results in a collision of cultures.[35] One editor recalls situations in which his supervisors "had to beat on my head, because I'm

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[29] Jennie L. Phipps, "USA Today Isn't Leaving Convergence Till Tomorrow," *Electronic Media* (December 18, 2000): 18.

[30] Authors' conversations with *Tribune* editors.

[31] Mark Fitzgerald, "Media Convergence Faces Tech Barrier," *Editor & Publisher* 15 January 2001, 30.

[32] Although these partners define convergence in terms of their alliances, one *Post* editor, Howard Saltz, commented that one day "a reporter will report across any of these platforms, with no need for distinctions. And we're taking steps in that direction." Roberts, (accessed).

[33] Silcock and Keith, 1.

[34] Fee (accessed); Finberg (accessed); Wayne Robins, "King of Convergence," *Editor & Publisher* 15 October 2000, i13.

[35] Bulla (accessed); Don Corrigan, "Convergence – Over-Worked Reporters with Less News," *St. Louis Journalism Review* 32, no. 250 (2002): 21, 23; Hammond, Petersen, and Thomsen, 2, 24; Robins, i12; Silcock and Keith, 3.

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accustomed to seeing other mediums as competitor."[36] Another editor reported that he encouraged meetings between personnel from cooperating newspaper and television newsrooms so that each could see that their counterparts "don't have horns and spiked tails."[37] The literature suggests the cultural conflicts might be resolved through management techniques such as the identification and use of people who might most easily adapt new strategies and the adoption of a planned process of organizational learning.[38] Indeed, Fee, in his analysis of data from a survey on newsroom culture, concludes the work culture of individual newsrooms is an extremely powerful factor in the socializing of newsroom members. His study suggests convergence behaviors might be more readily adopted as they become part of the newsroom routine. [39]

As the literature shows, current definitions of newsroom convergence describe processes that involve some sharing of resources between media organizations. Scholars and practitioners, however, seldom define the term in a manner that allows the categorization of specific cross-media behaviors. Nor do they acknowledge that the important question is not whether an operation is doing convergence, but the degree to which it is. As Poynter's Al Tompkins writes: "I hear every week from middle managers that their bosses or owners order them to 'get converged' without any real notion of why, what it would look like when we are finished, or how this will help the community."[40] The Convergence Continuum moves previous definitions forward by enabling the determination – and the measurement – of different levels of interaction and cooperation. Further, the continuum takes into account the fact that cultural conflict is an important element in the journey toward convergence.

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[36] Roberts, (accessed).

[37] Lucia Moses, "TV or Not TV? Few Newspapers Are Camera-Shy," *Editor & Publisher*, 21 August 2000, 23.

[38] Finberg (accessed).

[39] Fee (accessed.

[40] Al Tompkins, *Convergence Needs a Leg to Stand On* [Web Page] February 28, 2001, accessed February 28, 2003); available at http://www.poynter.org/centerpiece/022801tompkins.htm).

Furthering media research

The Convergence Continuum has implications for both researchers and practitioners as a tool for the study, understanding, and implementation of cross-media efforts because it provides a heuristic for the way in which two traditionally separate, competitive, and culturally different media can share work or even create a third media operation. For researchers, the continuum provides the tools needed to return to the kind of multi-disciplinary study that marks the roots of media research in the tradition of political scientist Harold Lasswell, social psychologist Kurt Lewin, and sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld. It can provide research that is needed on gatekeeping in converged media at the routines and organizational levels of analysis.[41] It also can help extend research in diffusion of innovation as used in media, agricultural, and health studies.

For practitioners, the continuum's usefulness is twofold. First, it offers media managers a model of the cross-media activities they can pursue. Second, in a less practical – but perhaps more comforting vein – the continuum offers journalists some peace of mind that they are not alone in being puzzled over what constitutes convergence. Rather than dictating whether certain endeavors are or are not worthy of being called convergence, the model offers confirmation that a wide range of cooperative and interactive activities fall within the convergence continuum.

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[41] Pamela J. Shoemaker, "Media Gatekeeping," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Michael B. Salwen and Don W. Stacks (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1996): 90.

Gatekeeping

Compared to the more sophisticated studies that followed, the original work on gatekeeping can seem dated.[42] White's work, after all, focused on one week's work of one wire editor.[43] Still, it broke ground, and in the fifty years since its appearance, researchers have extended the study of gatekeeping activities in newspaper newsrooms to activities in television newsrooms[44] and at Web sites.[45] They also have expanded their study from the individual communication worker to the study of four other levels of analysis: journalists' routines, organizational variables, social and institutional influences, and social-system variables.[46] The Convergence Continuum provides a framework researchers can use to expand their studies in four important areas of gatekeeping. First is the extent to which the differing news values of individual newspaper and television journalists affect decisions made in cross-media partnerships. Second and third are two areas Shoemaker has noted provide ripe ground for research: the effect on the new media operations of the different established routines of newspaper and broadcast journalists and the effect of the different organizational structures of those organizations.[47] Finally, the continuum can help researchers measure the relative strengths

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[42] Reese and Ballinger, 642.

[43] David Manning White, "The 'Gate Keeper': A study in the Selection of News," *Journalism Quarterly,* 27 (Winter 1950): 384.

[44] Eric A. Abbott and Lynn T. Brassfield, "Comparing Decisions on Releases by TV and Newspaper Gatekeepers," *Journalism Quarterly,* 66 (Winter 1989): 856-856; David Berkowitz, "Refining the gatekeeping Metaphor for Local Television News," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 34 (1990): 66; Mark D. Harmon, "Mr. Gates Goes Electronic: The What and Why Questions in Local TV News," *Journalism Quarterly,* 66 (Winter 1989): 857-863.

[45] Fred Beard and Rolf Olsen, "Webmasters as Mass Media Gatekeepers: A Qualitative Exploratory Study," *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy,* 9, No. 3 (1999): 200-211; Jane B. Singer, "The Metro Wide Web: Changes in Newspapers' Gatekeeping Role Online," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* 78 (Spring 2001): 65-85.

[46] Pamela J. Shoemaker, *Gatekeeping, Communication Concepts 3* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991): 32.

[47] Shoemaker, "Media Gatekeeping," 90.

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of the different forces that determine whether a news item passes through the gate and reaches the news consumer.

Individual journalists. White's study of one wire editor, Mr. Gates, concluded that in most cases Mr. Gates' decisions on which stories to run were "highly subjective" and based on his "own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations" of what is news.[48] Although White noted that a story is transmitted from one gatekeeper (such as the reporter) to another gatekeeper (such as a wire service editor) in a communication chain, he chose to focus on one person as the "last gate keeper."[49] In the ensuing 50 years, researchers have argued that organizational factors or professional routines carry more influence than one gatekeeper on what the audience sees, or that the gatekeeping function generally is shared by many people.[50] Still some researchers have tried to identify the news values individual gatekeepers use to determine which stories they will allow through the gates. Those studies have shown that although television and newspaper decision-makers use traditional news values such as proximity, significance, timeliness, and conflict in deciding which stories to run, they have ranked the importance of those values in different orders.[51] Some research has shown proximity to be the single most important news value considered by all media workers,[52] while other research has suggested audience interest and whether the story offers good visuals is especially important in story selection for TV journalists.[53] Berkowitz said television gatekeepers base their selections on their "instincts" about what makes a good news program.[54]

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[48] White, 386.

[49] White, 384.

[50] See, for example, Reese and Ballinger, 647; Shoemaker, *Gatekeeping*, 13-16.

[51] Abbott and Brassfield, 854.

[52] Ibid., 855.

The suggestion that newspaper and television journalists bring different values to their jobs presents an opportunity to researchers studying cross-media partnerships. The Convergence Continuum provides a conceptual framework for studying how individual gatekeepers' values influence what passes through the gates of a cross-media partnership. Intuitively, the model suggests that at the left side of the model (cross-promotion and cloning), individual gatekeepers will continue to follow the news values they practiced in their native medium when deciding which news items to pass along to their partners and which of their partner's stories they will accept. For true convergence to happen, the partners would need to agree on news values. The question for researchers to answer is at which point on the continuum agreement happens and what that agreement means to the audience.

Established media routines. Many researchers have chronicled journalists' need to establish routines in an effort to sift through the hundreds of messages they receive each day and must process in a short period of time. That research has suggested routines determine which stories will pass through the gates and which elements of the story will be emphasized.[55] Although in his first study of newspaper gatekeeping activities, Gieber said individual news values were one of many considerations that the gatekeeper used, he concluded that values played a secondary role to more practical constraints, such as deadline pressure and limited space. The gatekeeper, he said, was "caught in a straight jacket of mechanical details." Copy editing wire stories had "disintegrated into wire-copy fixing," he wrote.[56] As Gieber and other researchers continued to extend White's work to professional norms and organizational constraints, they found the individual newspaper gatekeeper to be much more passive than White did, and more reliant on such journalistic routines as deadlines, space constraints, the inverted pyramid, and beat systems.[57] Although one study has suggested the need for visuals to tell a story to be an important routine for television gatekeepers,[58] routines in television news have been largely ignored by researchers.

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[53] Abbott and Brassfield, 856; Harmon, 863.

[54] Berkowitz, 66.

[55] *See* Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, 2d ed. (New York: Longman, 1996); Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

Of particular importance to the new cross-media partnerships are two suggestions in the gatekeeping literature. One is the number of gatekeepers involved in different media. Some studies have suggested news goes through multiple gatekeepers at newspapers,[59] while others have suggested it goes through only one gatekeeper at television stations.[60] The second is the broader picture of gatekeeping offered by Donohue et al. Rather than relating only to which stories pass through the gate, they suggested gatekeeping includes the selection, shaping, display, timing, withholding or repetition of messages.[61] Still another routine worth studying, but not largely addressed in the literature, is the different beat structures of print and broadcast outlets.

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[56] Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors," *Journalism Quarterly* 33 (Fall 1956) 432.

[57] *See* Gieber, Shoemaker and Reese, Tuchman.

[58] Abbott and Brassfield, 856.

[59] John T. McNelly, "Intermediary Communicators in the International Flow of News," *Journalism Quarterly*, 36 (Spring 1959).

[60] Abbott and Brassfield, 855.

[61] George A. Donohue, Phillip J. Tichenor, and Clarice N Olien, "Gatekeeping: Mass Media Systems and Information Control," in F.G. Kline and Phillip J. Tichenor (eds.), *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1972): 43,

As the convergence literature suggests, existing cross-media partnerships have struggled in trying to meld the different cultural norms of broadcast and print journalists.[62] Current gatekeeping research does not indicate whether the established routines of the newspaper or the broadcast outlet will prevail in making content decisions.[63] Four areas of study are of particular interest. First, is further study of how the routines of television newspaper newsrooms differ. Take, for example, the different beat systems. Because television news outlets generally have fewer reporters than newspapers, they have fewer specialists in specific topic areas such as the environment or education. The result is that the newspaper partner is more likely to produce considerable numbers of stories that the television partner has chosen to not cover or does not have the staff or the expertise to cover. Questions arise on whether, at lower levels of the continuum, the newspaper journalists will be willing to share those stories or will try to keep them for their native medium. By extension, the second area of study is the routines that must be shaped when the two media attempt to create a third, digital-based medium, such as a Web site. On the plus side, digital media have no space constraints, but on the flip side, online journalists face constant deadline pressures as they work to publish their work as quickly as possible. Obviously new routines will need to emerge to accommodate the needs of the new medium. The third area of study is the number of gatekeepers a message goes through before it reaches the audience. If newspaper and television journalists are accustomed to sending messages through different numbers of gatekeepers, they bring different routines to the converged operation. The question is which set of routines will survive.

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[62] *See*, Finberg; Robins, 2000; Silcock and Keith.

[63] Shoemaker, "Media Gatekeeping," 90.

Perhaps of most interest is the fourth area of study: the shaping of the news. If gatekeeping includes the selection, shaping, display, timing, withholding or repetition of messages, as Donohue et al. suggested, the routines of television and newspaper staffs obviously clash. By offering a behavior-based model for studying mixed-media partnerships, the Convergence Continuum allows study into how the different ways in which newspapers, television, and digital media shape, display, and time news informs which items make their way through the gate to the audience. For example, television journalists are accustomed to updating and delivering their stories multiple times during the day, while most newspapers deliver their stories only once. The Convergence Continuum suggests that in the lower levels of convergence, journalists will continue to follow the routines of their native media. The question for researchers is which set of routines will survive as the partnerships move toward higher levels of convergence, or how the partnerships work to establish new routines.

Organizational constraints. In arguing that social forces within the newsroom influence what becomes news, Warren Breed challenged the importance of norms and newsroom routines as the determinant of what is news. Every newspaper, Breed wrote, "has a policy, admitted or not."[64] As researchers began applying gatekeeping to the organizational level, they studied such areas as the sensitivity of journalists to criteria established by publishers.[65] Although journalists can impose their individual values on their work, researchers suggest organizational forces ultimately win out because the organization has the ability to hire and fire workers who do or do not follow acceptable practices.[66] Abraham divided gatekeeping into two distinct functions: news gathering and news processing and said gatekeeping is determined by a person's functional role within the organization.[67]

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[64] Warren Breed, "Social Control in the News Room: A functional Analysis," *Social Forces*, 33 (1955), 327

[65] Lewis Donohew, "Newspaper Gatekeepers and Forces in the News Channel," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 31 (1967), 66-67.

[66] Shoemaker, "Media Gatekeeping," 83.

The Convergence Continuum allows researchers to explore Abraham's idea further because at lower levels of the continuum, news gathering and processing are expected to be done by separate staffs, and at higher levels the process is expected to be performed by combined staffs. The continuum also allows researchers to test another question the literature has yet to address: the degree to which organizational constraints affect what the audience sees,[68] particularly as it relates to the converged newsroom. Although some cross-media partnerships involve newspapers and television stations owned by the same company, most do not. The outlets owned by different organizations bring different organizational norms to their work on top of different media routines. Jon Schwantes, for example, called himself the "corporate link" in his former job as associate editor/director of new partnerships for the cross-media efforts of *The Indianapolis Star* and WTHR-TV. "I represent two completely different ends of the spectrum," he said. "Every day I go to work, I do the newspaper equivalent of bringing together Eminem and Elton John – and it's not always beautiful music."[69]

The question for researchers is which set of organizational norms most informs what the audience sees.

Forces. In the early work on gatekeeping, Lewin said positive and negative forces on either side of a gate determine whether an item passes through the gate.[70] Negative forces, such as a lack of visuals needed to meet television's demands, can prevent a story through a gate. A positive force, such as journalists' value on proximity and significance, can propel a story through a gate. Neither Lewin nor subsequent researchers has fully elaborated on the nature of the forces. Among other things, Lewin did not address two specific points that become interrelated in cross-media partnerships: that forces might have different strengths and conflict with others in determining whether an item passes through a gate and that different forces can affect the entire gatekeeping function, not just the selection of stories.[71]

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[67] Abraham Z. Bass, "Refining the 'Gatekeeping' Concept: A UN Radio Case Study," *Journalism Quarterly* (Spring 1969): 72.

[68] Ibid., 90.

[69] Wayne Robins, "If Eminem and Elton can do it, Why Not Old and New Media?," *Editor & Publisher* 5 March, 2001, 16

[70] Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers* (New York: Harper, 1951).

Identifying the strength and conflict of various forces becomes a critical factor in cross-media partnerships in determining which stories will pass through to the audience. The Convergence Continuum can help researchers determine the relative strengths of the individual journalists' values, media routines, and organizational constraints of the different media involved in the partnerships. For example, it can delve into such questions as whether the organizational constraints of one partner are stronger than the organizational constraints of the other partner.

Although researchers have been studying gatekeeping for more than fifty years, questions remain of how different forces operate to determine what news gets to the audiences. Mixed-media partnerships offer researchers new venues for extending the understanding of gatekeeping. They also provide researchers opportunities for further study in another area of study: diffusion of innovation.

Diffusion of innovations

The Convergence Continuum's utility becomes especially apparent when it is viewed from theoretical framework of the diffusion of innovations, which describes how a new idea, practice, or object is communicated over time through social channels. This framework offers a multidisciplinary approach, pragmatic appeal, flexibility, and clear-cut methodology. In his comprehensive work on the subject, Rogers noted that, although most diffusion research examines processes after innovations have been adopted, alternative approaches to this type of research should be explored. "It is possible to investigate the diffusion of an innovation while the diffusion process is underway," he wrote.[72] Rogers noted that organizations go through the steps of agenda stetting, matching, and redefining/restructuring as they adopt new innovations.[73]

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[71] Shoemaker, *Gatekeeping*, 23-25.

Considering the degree of discussion about convergence in broadcast and print newsrooms and the different levels at which newsrooms have embraced the concept, convergence can be a particularly potent source for extending the diffusion study. The Convergence Continuum could be especially useful in identifying – in real time – how media organizations move through the stages as they adopt different behaviors that lead from one level on the continuum to the next.

Conclusion

The Convergence Continuum is a dynamic model that defines convergence as a series of behavior-based activities that illustrate the interaction and cooperation levels among staff members at newspapers, television stations and Web organizations with editorial partnerships. The continuum levels of cross-promotion, cloning, coopetition, content sharing, and convergence serve as a touchstone for media professionals who are developing alliances with a variety of news partners. The model also is important because it provides a common definition and an infrastructure on which researchers can build communication theory as it applies to cross-media efforts. While the continuum could help extend multidisciplinary research into the construction of news, the operationalization of the model's levels may be particularly useful when studying the effects of convergence on gatekeeping. Cross-media partnerships force individual journalists to reexamine cultural and organizational differences as they select stories, produce content across platforms, and establish new routines. As the literature has suggested, the way stories are shaped and presented is an important part of gatekeeping research.[74]

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[72] Everett E. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 1995 (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 98-99, 106.

[73] Ibid., 122, 393-395.

The nonjudgmental design of the Convergence Continuum also provides the flexibility to examine gatekeeping issues even when individuals resist manager-designed convergence plans, and partnerships exist among news organizations not owned by the same corporation. Future tests of the model's usefulness likely would include qualitative and quantitative research methodology including on-site observation in newsrooms, interviews with journalists and managers, and a content analysis of each partner's stories.

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[74] Donohue et al., 43

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A comparative analysis of source and reporter gender in newsrooms managed by men versus women

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Introduction

Efforts to increase the diversity of newsroom staffs in terms of gender, race and ethnicity rest in part on a kind of conventional wisdom that these demographic differences can (and even ought) to produce diversity in the types of news covered or in the ways news is covered. But do those characteristics really matter when it comes to shaping the news? Research seems to suggest that the answer is both yes and no.

Gatekeeping theory, initially applied to news in David Manning White's study of a wire editor he dubbed "Mr. Gates," suggests that individual journalists shape the news through their decisions about which potential news items do and do not pass through the gates and into the newspaper or newscast. A gatekeeper's personal beliefs, White found, influenced those decisions. A broad range of research, however, suggests that these individual influences on the news are muted by news routines and conventions (e.g., Shoemaker, Eicholz, Kim and Wrigley, 2001; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Berkowitz and Beach, 1993; Brown, Bybee, Weardon and Straughan, 1987). More general models of news production acknowledge the importance of external factors in shaping the news. McQuail's model (1993), for example, places the media organization, not the individual journalist, at the center of a web of social forces that include sources, advertisers, competitors, and the like. The individual within the organization is subject to all the pressures impinging on the organization.

Research also has addressed the factors that help shape those news routines and conventions. For example, researchers have attempted to discover what impact civic journalism, which calls for setting aside many traditional news routines, has on the news (Kurpius, 2002; Massey, 1999). Others have examined the largely "male" culture of the newsroom (e.g., Turk, 1987), noting its persistence despite the increasing number of women in the profession.

The present study seeks to add to the literature on the impact of individual characteristics on the news, in particular addressing whether one can link gender to differences in practices related to use of sources. More specifically, do journalists in a newsroom with a relatively high percentage of female gatekeepers differ in their use of sources compared with journalists in more male-dominated newsrooms?

Women in the newsroom

Weaver and Wilhoit's portrait of journalists shows that the typical journalist is male, Protestant, liberal, college-educated and middle-class (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). That these numbers do not represent the demographics of the American public generally is one reason, among others, that a number of journalism organizations, including the American Society of Newspaper Editors, have made increasing newsroom diversity a top priority. In addition, a broad range of research had demonstrated that women and minorities are often portrayed in stereotypical ways or are covered differently from men in the news (see, for example, Kahn, 1994 and Devitt, 2002, which address the treatment of female political candidates in news coverage).

Though women journalists began making inroads into what had been a largely male occupation long ago, it is only in the past 20 years that they have ascended to higher levels of management. Even so, their representation at the top does not match their representation in the profession overall, much less in society. A recent census of newsroom employment found that women constituted 37 percent of the newsroom workforce; and 34 percent of all newsroom supervisors are women (ASNE, 2001). A

2002 study of women in newspapers found "only 18 percent of the corporate executives at assistant vice president or higher are women" (Hemlinger and Linton, 2002, p. 16).

Cultural barriers are often cited as the explanation of such findings. Indeed research (e.g., Cann and Mohr, 2001; Turk, 1987; Brown, Bybee, Weardon & Straughan, 1987) suggests that male culture in the newsroom may explain both the relative lack of women in higher posts as well as the continuation of norms and routines that serve to standardize the news and diminish the potential for individual characteristics to have an impact on it. Burks and Stone (1993) found few differences in the professional experiences, including management styles, of female and male television news directors, pointing to a consistency of newsroom operations, regardless of managers' gender.

As van Zoonen (1988) and Liebler (1994) point out, to argue that the presence of greater numbers of women in the newsroom can have an impact on the news itself assumes an autonomy for individual journalists that is not borne out by research on journalistic routines and conventions. Moreover, Liebler's study indicated no difference in the sense of personal autonomy reported by male and female journalists, regardless of the numbers of women in the newsroom.

Bleske replicated White's gatekeeping study, this time with a female wire editor, and found no effects that could be attributed to gender (Bleske, 1991). However, there is evidence that male and female reporters are routinely assigned stories on the basis of gender. Craft and Wanta (2002), for example, found male and female reporters covered different issues – men covering traditionally "hard" news and women more features and "soft" news – but only in newsrooms with predominantly male editors. That is, in newsrooms with female managers, reporter assignments did not appear to differ according to reporter gender. So, if women are relegated to "women's news," the extent to which they can bring a "woman's perspective" to other news is limited (Singleton and Cook, 1982). A content analysis of 20 years of women's magazines indicated that the presence of female editors did not reduce stereotypical portrayals of women.

Sources and the news

Gans (1979) considered sources to be of primary significance in explaining the news. Sources can affect the content of news, through psychological pressures on the reporter to maintain relationships (Manoff and Schudson, 1986) and avoid angering sources. Social location and organizational routine affect source selection by restricting "how wide journalists cast their nets for news" and, therefore, the kinds of news that is covered (Manoff and Schudson, 1986, p. 16). Sigal (1973) found that *Washington Post* and *New York Times* reporters relied on "routine channels" of information to report stories, a finding reconfirmed by later research (Brown, Bybee, Wearden and Straughan, 1987). These studies and others document journalists' reliance on elite, government and largely male news sources. For example, Hallin, Manoff and Weddle (1993) confirmed previous research indicating reporters' reliance on elite news sources. They also found that 97 percent of the sources national security reporters used were male.

It is important to note, as Voakes, Kapfer, Kurpius, and Chern (1996) argue, that source diversity and content diversity are distinct and vary independently. Their study did not address gender diversity specifically, but their definition of source diversity as a distribution of sources across status, affiliation and other variables can be expanded to include gender, Kurpius (2002) argues.

Source and reporter gender

Researchers have found significant differences between male and female newspaper reporters in their selection of male and female sources and prominence given to those sources in news stories (Armstrong, 2002; Zoch & Turk, 1999; and Liebler & Smith, 1997). In broadcast, Smith and Wright (1998) found no significant link between proportion of women in local television news management and use of female sources. Can and Mohr (2001) also found no differences in source selection by male and female reporters on primetime news broadcasts in Australia, but significant differences in the length of stories reported by male and female reporters and the topics they covered. Results of a study by Grabe, Zhou and Barnett (1999), however, suggested that female reporters seek out female sources.

Massey (1999) found that women appeared as information sources more often under civic journalism, but only marginally and only in stories reported by female journalists. In another civic journalism study by Kurpius (2002), female civic journalists included more female sources in their stories than did male civic journalists, though the use of female sources overall did not reflect U.S. Census figures.

Hypotheses

Previous research both suggests that source selection may differ according to reporter gender and that it is difficult to establish those differences given journalistic routines that mute individual impact on the news and favor certain kinds of sources. The present study, then, seeks to examine whether source selection is related to a predominance of women in positions of power in the newsroom and not individual journalist gender alone. The cited literature suggests the following hypotheses:

H1: The use of male and female sources will differ according to whether a newspaper's editors are predominantly men or women.

H2: Female reporters will use a greater percentage of female sources than male reporters use.

H3: The source selection strategies of male and female reporters will be influenced by the predominant gender of their editors.

Method

Articles from 30 U.S. daily newspapers, selected at random from Editor and Publisher Yearbook, were analyzed in this study. Using random number tables to determine starting pages and subsequent listings, the researchers compiled a list of newspapers, noting the number of job positions listed under the headings "News Executives" and "Editors" and the number of those positions held by men and women. Names that are not unquestionably "male" or "female" were counted separately.

Where possible, researchers sought to balance the geographic distribution of papers in each category and the overall sample. Newspapers that did not have websites were eliminated from the sample. Table 1 lists the newspapers that were included in the study.

Articles for the analysis were selected from a constructed week beginning February 21, 2002, and ending March 9, 2002. All local news stories – defined as those stories with local staff bylines – were included. Because many of the smaller newspapers do not publish Sunday editions, Sunday was eliminated from the week. In cases when stories were not available, stories from the next available day were used. For instance, three newspapers did not publish on Saturday, so the following Monday was included. One newspaper did not publish on Saturday or Monday. In this case, we included the following Tuesday and Wednesday.

It should be noted that the stories included in the analysis were only those that the newspapers had uploaded to their websites. While this method did not necessarily mean that all local stories published on any given day were included in our analysis, it did provide us with a good range of stories, and certainly included the most important stories of the day. The total number of stories analyzed was 818.

Coding

The unit of analysis for this study was the newspaper article. Three coders conducted the analysis. Coders recorded the newspaper circulation size and the percentage of management positions held by women. Coders also noted reporter gender based upon the article byline. Reporter gender for articles without bylines and articles with bylines that could be either "male" or "female" was not coded.

Sources in stories were coded both for gender and for status. Following a scheme developed by Cann and Mohr (2001), status was determined by examining the source's role within the context of the story. "[W]here the occupation of the source was given and appeared relevant to the story, the source was coded as expert. If the source was interviewed as a bystander, witness, relative, or victim, or otherwise signified a general public response … the source was coded as non-expert" (Cann & Mohr, 2001, p. 167). Therefore, sources were given one of the following codes: male expert, male non-expert, female expert, or female non-expert. Where the gender of the source could not be determined, it was not included in the analysis.

Results

A total of 1,766 sources were included in the analysis. Of these, 1,102, or 62.4 percent, were male experts, 333 (18.9 percent) were female experts, 178 (10.1 percent) were male non-experts and 153 (8.7 percent) were female non-experts. Clearly, male experts were highly relied upon by the reporters in the study.

Table 2 lists the frequencies and the chi-square results for the use of sources across the 30 newspapers in our study. Male experts were predominantly used at both newspapers with high and low percentages of women in managerial positions, but especially so at high women newspapers. Interestingly, female experts were more likely to be used at the low women newspapers. Female and male non-experts were used similarly across newspapers. The difference in source use across the newspapers was statistically significant (chi-square = 17.43, p = .017). These findings contradict the expectation of Hypothesis 1.

Table 3 shows the results of the analysis examining source use by male and female reporters. The differences here also were statistically significant (chi-square = 8.828, p = .032). Female reporters clearly were more likely to use female experts and non-experts than were male reporters. Male reporters, on the other hand, used more male experts and non-experts. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

The results examining differences for male and female reporters across newspapers with high and low percentages of women in managerial positions appear in

Table 4. Male and female reporters did not differ in their use of sources at newspapers with a high percentage of women in managerial positions. However, at male dominated newspapers, male and female reporters did differ. Here, male reporters were more likely to use male non-experts than were female reporters. Female reporters were more likely to use female non-experts than were male reporters. Reporter gender did not matter in the use of expert sources, however. Both male and female reporters used male experts more than 50 percent of the time and female experts about 23 percent of the time. These findings support Hypothesis 3.

The number of sources per story did not differ significantly across any of the variables here. Newspapers with a high percentage of women managers averaged 2.57 sources per story, and newspapers with a low percentage of women managers averaged 2.36 sources. Male reporters used 2.82 sources per story, and female reporters used 2.68.

Discussion

The present study examined gender differences in the use of sources in news stories. The study had two main concerns here: 1. whether the gender of reporters mattered in the type of sources selected for use in stories; 2. whether newspapers with high percentages of women in management differed from newspapers with low percentages of women in management in their use of sources. The results point to several differences.

First, journalists at male-dominated newspapers actually used more female experts and fewer male experts in their news stories. This is the opposite of what might be expected. If male editors are predominant in a newspaper's management structure, reporters logically should be more likely to use more traditional sources, concentrating on male experts. Our content analysis, however, found the opposite. The reasons for this finding are puzzling.

Possibly, women in management may feel the need to prove their abilities within the traditionally male-dominated business and thus encourage their reporters to gather information from traditional sources – such as male experts. Men in male-dominated newsrooms, on the other hand, may feel the need to prove that they are not biased and therefore attempt to use more female sources in reporting. Certainly, this bears further research.

In all 30 newspapers, female reporters, meanwhile, used more female sources – both experts and non-experts – in their stories. This, of course, could have been because of a conscious effort on the part of female reporters to get women's perspectives in their stories. It also could have been because female reporters feel more comfortable with interviewing women for their stories than do male reporters.

On the other hand, female reporters may have been placed in beats in which female sources are more important – the education beat or the lifestyle section, for example. Male reporters, meanwhile, may still dominate in the more traditional beats, such as politics, as Craft and Wanta (2002) found.

Another finding also points to this final explanation: Female and male reporters at male-dominated newspapers differed in their use of sources. Here, female reporters were more likely to use female non-experts and male reporters were more likely to use male non-experts. The gender difference was found for non-expert sources only. Again, beat differences may have been the cause here. If male and female reporters are placed in traditionally gender-based beats – men in hard news beats and women in soft news, feature beats – they would be more likely to use sources that match the gender of their beats – male non-experts for male reporters and female non-experts for female reporters.

Male and female reporters at newspapers with a high percentage of women in management, on the other hand, did not differ in their use of sources. Male experts dominated in all stories, regardless of the gender of the reporter. This again may show that, in newspapers in which women hold important managerial positions, female reporters are on equal footing with male reporters. Since men and women are not relegated to traditional gender-based beats, they tend to report similar stories and thus tend to use similar sources. Thus, from a socialization of the news perspective, male and female reporters conduct their news routines in a similar manner – if the management of their newspaper puts them on equal terms.

Another indication of support for a socialization of news perspective can be seen in the frequency of sources used by reporters. Male and female reporters used a similar number of sources per story. Similarly, newspapers with a larger percentage of women in management did not differ from newspapers with a small percentage of women in management on the number of sources used. Thus, news stories were constructed similarly in many of the comparisons here.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate a tendency for male and female reporters to use sources based on their gender. Moreover, the gender makeup of the newsroom appears to have some influence on source selection practices as well, though not, perhaps, in the ways we might anticipate. Certainly further research needs to address how the culture of the newsroom contributes to these differences.

Table 1. Newspapers included in the study, by relative percentage of female editors

High percentage	Percent of women managers
The (Middlesboro, KY) Daily News	72.7
Americus (GA) Times-Recorder	83.3
(Ionia, MI) Sentinel-Standard	100
New Braunfels (TX) Herald-Zeitung	100
Baraboo (WI) News Republic	75.0
The (Hanover, PA) Evening Sun	54.5
Cleveland (TN) Daily Banner	81.8
(Eureka, CA) Times-Standard	62.5
Martinsville (VA) Bulletin	62.5
The (Maryville, TN) Daily Times	50.0
Pensacola (FL) News-Journal	52.4
The (Quincy, MA) Patriot Ledger	54.1
The Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel	50.5
The Trentonian	66.7
Kalamazoo Gazette	50.0
Low percentage	
(Mount Carmel, IL) Daily Republican Register	0
Los Alamos (NM) Monitor	42.9
The Ashland (OR) Daily Tidings	8.3
The Logan (WV) Banner	0
Edwardsville (IL) Intelligencer	0
(Redding, CA) Record Searchlight	28.6
Lancaster (OH) Eagle-Gazette	38.5
The (Norristown, PA) Times Herald	42.9
(Lafayette, IN) Journal and Courier	30.0
Northwest Florida Daily News	25.0
The Vancouver (WA) Columbian	12.5
(Youngstown, OH) Vindicator	35.5
The (Bergen County-Hackensack, NJ) Record	31.4
The (Springfield, MA) Union-News	21.2
The (Santa Rosa, CA) Press Democrat	25

Table 2. Source use at newspapers with high and low percentages of women in managerial positions (frequencies and column percentages).

	High women newspapers	**Low women newspapers**
Male expert	622 (67.1%)	623 (58.2%)
Female expert	148 (16.0%)	230 (21.5%)
Male non-expert	85 (9.2%)	122 (11.4%)
Female non-expert	72 (7.8%)	95 (8.9%)

Chi-square = 17.43 (3 d.f.), p = .001

Table 3. Source use by male and female reporters (frequencies and column percentages).

	Female reporters	Male reporters
Male expert	397 (59.5%)	705 (64.1%)
Female expert	143 (21.4%)	190 (17.3%)
Male non-expert	60 (9.0%)	118 (10.7%)
Female non-expert	67 (10.0%)	86 (7.8%)

Chi-square = 8.828 (3 d.f.), p = .032

Table 4. Source use by male and female reporters at newspapers with high and low percentages of women in managerial positions (frequencies and column percentages).

High women newspapers

	Female reporters	**Male reporters**
Male expert	172 (68.3%)	385 (67.3%)
Female expert	42 (16.7%)	78 (13.6%)
Male non-expert	20 (7.9%)	56 (9.7%)
Female non-expert	18 (7.1%)	53 (9.3%)

Chi-square = 2.693 (3 d.f.), p = .441

Low women newspapers

	Female reporters	**Male reporters**
Male expert	225 (55.6%)	287 (58.3%)
Female expert	91 (22.5%)	112 (22.8%)
Male non-expert	40 (9.9%)	62 (12.6%)
Female non-expert	49 (12.1%)	31 (6.3%)

Chi-square = 10.131 (3 d.f.), p = .017

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THE PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC MAIL IN NEWSPAPER NEWSGATHERING

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THE PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC MAIL IN NEWSPAPER NEWSGATHERING

ABSTRACT

Journalists from U.S. daily newspapers responded to a national survey focusing on the credibility of electronic mail use in newsgathering. Factor analysis produced a six dimension solution. The dominant factor was accuracy, but other factors included completeness, sociability, clarity, timeliness, and techno-complexity. Journalists expressed concern for the perceived lack of accuracy and completeness, but were ambiguous about its sociability. Clarity and understandability were viewed as significant components, as were speed and timeliness. The high technology characteristic was seen as a complication.

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THE PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC MAIL IN NEWSPAPER NEWSGATHERING

Electronic mail has become an important communication tool for journalists.[1] They take advantage of its speed, low cost, convenience, flexibility, power, and security despite the hardware and computer literacy requirements, occasional language complications, and accessibility problems. They also use electronic mail to locate hard-to-find sources and to reschedule interviews. Electronic mail has, in effect, replaced fax machines in the process of transferring of information into newsrooms. It is faster, more reliable, personalized, and does not require paper.[2]

Concerns that journalists have traditionally expressed about sources— such as verification of identification and general authenticity matters— are often found in research about electronic mail and other network communication. Some characteristics of electronic mail, such as the anonymity of sender location, role of the sender, and even the identity of the sender, are problematic. Similarly, the absence of social context clues is often troubling to professionals who must evaluate the quality of the information provided before it is used. These matters often lead to concerns about fabricated or artificial quotations and other types of information forgery.[3] Frank concluded that electronic mail is valuable to reporters, but that it falls short when compared to other interview techniques.[4]

An issue that has emerged with this growth in use is the credibility of new technologies and new media news delivery systems. Widespread access to personal information, including tracking online purchases, property ownership records and residential telephone numbers, have led to increasing public distrust of online sources of information. One in three media Web sites posted their privacy policies for information provided voluntarily by users.[5] Online statements of privacy policy are often lengthy and nearly incomprehensible because of the legal jargon employed.

Much has been written over the past half century about communicator credibility. Since the early experimental work of Hovland and Weiss, much research effort has been made toward determining the dimensions of individual and organizational source credibility.[6] Two perennial dimensions of source credibility have been the trustworthiness and expertise of the source.[7] Whitehead's work, almost two decades later, identified trustworthiness, but also emphasized professionalism or competence, dynamism, and objectivity.[8] Safety, qualification, and dynamism were also identified in research to be source credibility factors.[9] As new mass communication technologies have appeared, research has turned to investigate perceived credibility and components of audience attitudes that comprise those perceptions. Interest in newspaper credibility may have peaked in the late 1980s with a number of national studies, but the media credibility issue has recently been revived with the involvement of newspapers and television in Internet and Web-based news services.

Computer-Mediated Communication and Credibility

A number of empirical studies have analyzed the dimensions of credibility of computing technology, computer-mediated communication, the Internet, the Web, and online news. Because of the early public perceptions of the precision and accuracy of computers that led to a common belief that they were infallible and believable, even the basic credibility of computer-based technologies has been studied.[10] A number of scholars have emphasized the importance or "crucial" nature of such research.[11] Mayo and Leshner defined credibility in terms of its accuracy, fairness, bias, trustworthiness, and completeness. They concluded that computer-based news reporting was as credible as news reporting based on more traditional approaches.[12]

Media credibility research has largely ignored online news credibility because it remains new to journalism, but this may be changing. Scholars are beginning to publish online news use and credibility studies and some professional groups have looked at the subject as well.[13] There are substantial differences in online news and other, more-established news media such as television, radio, and newspapers. Online news can break at any time, thus, the dimension of timeliness must be considered. Flanagin and Metzger concluded that the Internet is a "multidimensional technology used in a similar manner to other, more traditional media."[14] News communication technologies extend users' capabilities but eventually are folded in with traditional media. They also found information-retrieval and information-giving similarities. They concluded that "needs fulfilled by these channels cluster in ways consistent with past research, regardless of the technologies employed to meet them."[15]

Tseng and Fogg found that computer users desire to trust their systems, but that the trust is often undermined when the system delivers erroneous information. They described four types of computer-based credibility: presumed (based on assumptions) credibility, reputed (based on third-party reports) credibility, surface (based on primitive inspection) credibility, and experienced (based on first-hand experience) credibility.

Factors they identified included user expertise, user understanding, user need for information, and evaluation errors influenced this credibility.[16]

Flanagin and Metzger concluded that the Internet was as credible as television, radio, and magazines, but not newspapers. Their study, however, did not distinguish between print and online newspapers. They found that credibility among different types of information sought by audiences, such as news and entertainment, varied by medium. Respondents reported that they did not verify information found on the Internet, but this finding varied by the type of information needed. The amount of experience using the Internet and how an individual perceived the information were associated with whether efforts were made to verify information found online.[17] Schweiger found newspapers were rated ahead of the Web and television on nine of eleven credibility items. He also found that Web users and non-users rate the credibility of the Web as remarkably similar to television and newspapers.[18]

Nadarajan and Ang found few online newspapers with corrections policies, but that errors were corrected as needed.[19] They concluded that the capabilities of the Web, such as hyperlinks and archiving, were not well used to enhance online news and information accuracy. In fact, they said current practices "add to the clutter of viewpoints that is symptomatic of this age of information overload."[20] While they do not directly connect this to online news credibility, the implications are clear.

Sundar determined credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness to be factors in the perception of online news stories.[21] Credibility in this context was a "global evaluation of the objectivity of the story."[22] Johnson and Kaye focused on political information. Their research found online media to be more believable, fair, accurate, and in-depth than traditional news media. Both online news media and traditional news media were judged by respondents to be somewhat credible.[23]

Branding, or being part of a previously established news organization, contributes to an online site's credibility. Ognianova examined the value of journalistic identity on the Web. Using experimental procedures, she found that online news providers associated with an established news organization such as a television station or newspaper, were judged more credible than content providers without such identification. Advertising was also judged more credible on sites with established journalistic identity compared to those without it.[24] Schweiger found that German students valuing a particular newspaper also tended to consider its Web site credible, even if they had never seen it.[25] Robinson and Kohut concluded that "what matters is neither personality nor technology. What matters most is news 'type,' where 'type' pertains mainly to the kind of journalism the source is believed to be practicing."[26]

Sundar determined that subjects rated stories with direct quotations from sources to be significantly higher in credibility and quality than those without. Use of direct quotations did not appear to affect subject ratings for online news or representativeness-newsworthiness.[27] Kiousis found news credibility perceptions influenced by media use and interpersonal discussion of news. Newspapers were seen as more credible than online news or television. Online news, however, was rated more credible than television. Like other studies of print and broadcast news media, Kiousis concluded that the credibility rating of a medium was associated with its use. He also found links between discussion of news and perceptions of television news, but not for online news or newspapers. He offered evidence of links between media use and public perceptions of credibility for newspapers and television news, but not in the assessment of online news.[28]

Johnson and Kaye compared traditional news sources and non-traditional online news sources among politically interested Web users. They concluded that online news media and online candidate literature were perceived to be more credible than traditional print and broadcast news media, even though both online news and traditional news media were perceived to be somewhat credible. No differences were found for news magazines and issue-oriented sources.[29] Sundar evaluated source attribution effects in perception of online news stories. Stories with attributed direct quotations were rated higher in credibility than identical stories not containing the quotations. The use of direct quotations did not affect liking for online news or perception of newsworthiness-representativeness of online news.[30]

Numerous researchers have developed original media credibility scales. Despite the diversity of scales, the various scale items are highly similar and usually measure the same underlying dimensions. Rather than searching for a single scale, researchers often create *ad hoc* scales to tap into hypothesized "dimensions" of credibility. Sundar developed a credibility scale applicable to both print newspapers and online newspapers.[31] Flanagin and Metzger used single-item measures in studying the credibility of Internet information. They operationalized credibility as a multidimensional concept built from five traditional components found in the literature: believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness.[32] Trustworthiness, fairness, bias, completeness, respect for privacy, representation of individual interests, accuracy, concern for community well-being, separation of fact and opinion, concern for public interest, factual foundations of information published, and qualifications of reporters were used as one set of credibility measures by Rimmer and Weaver.[33]

Credibility Measures

Semantic differential scales have been widely used in measurement of source credibility. Infante, for example, offered evidence supporting the construct validity of these scales.[34] Ognianova utilized nine semantic differential items to measure online news story credibility, including factual-opinionated, unfair-fair, accurate-inaccurate, untrustworthy-trustworthy, balanced-unbalanced, biased-unbiased, reliable-unreliable, thorough-not thorough, and informative-not informative.[35]

Wanta and Hu used believability and affiliation indices to evaluate media credibility. The believability index was built around media manipulation of public opinion, getting facts straight, dealing fairly with all sides of an issue, and separation of fact from opinion. Affiliation was measured with concern for community well being, watching out for reader interests, and concern for public welfare.[36] Gaziano and McGrath identified twelve dimensions of newspaper and television news credibility. They were fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, respect for privacy, watching out for people's interests, concern for community, separation of fact and opinion, trust, concern for public interest, factual, and level of training.[37] Gaziano also found twelve different sets of credibility operationalizations. These included believability, accuracy, completeness, and covering up facts, trustworthiness and reliability, being unbiased, balance of coverage, fairness, objectivity, other characteristics of press performance, such as invasion of privacy, covering up stories, overall evaluations of job performance, confidence in media institutions, comparisons of media with other institutions, independence of media from special interests and other organizations and institutions, power/influence of media in community or society, relationship of news media to government, honesty and ethical standards, and professionalism-training.[38]

Infante used trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism. For trustworthiness, he used honest-dishonest, trustworthy-untrustworthy, and sincere-insincere. For expertise, he chose skilled-unskilled, qualified-unqualified, and informed-uninformed. For dynamism, he included bold-timid, active-passive, and aggressive-meek.[39] Rodgers, Cameron, and Brill studied advertising effects on online news using credibility, believability, and trustworthiness semantic differential scale attitude measures.[40] Johnson and Kaye employed believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information in their study.[41] Sensationalism was one of six dimensions used by Sundar.[42] He also used accuracy, believability, bias, fairness, and objectivity. Kiousis measured online news credibility by asking respondents to assess whether online news is factual, concerned with making profits, invades people's privacy, concerned about the community's well being, and trustworthy on a five-point Likert-type scale.[43]

Research Questions

Despite the growing body literature about electronic mail, only a limited number of empirical studies have focused upon electronic mail as a news reporting resource. Research has not provided much insight into the perceptions of electronic mail credibility among journalists. If journalists do not see the resource as credible, its use will undoubtedly diminish. If it is valued and seen as credible, its use may continue to increase and its importance as a reporting resource will grow. The next step, it seems, would be to focus on the components or dimensions of electronic mail credibility. To move toward that end, these research questions were derived from the literature and will guide this study:

1. *What are the basic dimensions of electronic mail credibility?*
2. *To what degree is accuracy a component of electronic mail credibility?*
3. *Do journalists identify technological concerns and issues in use of electronic mail as a reporting resource?*
4. *Are traditional credibility dimensions of trustworthiness, objectivity, and completeness part of the conceptualization of electronic mail in a newsgathering context?*
5. *To what degree are timeliness and speed viewed as components of electronic mail use in newsgathering?*

STUDY METHOD

A national mail survey of newspaper journalists was conducted in fall 2001. Respondents were selected randomly using a multi-stage sample design. From a comprehensive list of nearly 1,600 daily newspapers in the United States, 500 newspapers were chosen using systematic interval sampling. To identify specific respondents contacted at each newspaper in the sample, the Web site of each newspaper was visited. The name of a current reporter or editor was randomly selected from news coverage on one business day in September 2001. Cover letters, questionnaires, and stamped, self-addressed return envelopes were sent directly to these respondents in early

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October 2001. A second mailing, to enhance response rate, was sent in early November 2001. The response rate was 40.2% (n = 201). While this response rate may be considered low, respondents reflected the primary demographics of the target population.[44]

A 47-item semantic differential credibility scale was developed. It was designed to evaluate the dimensions, or characteristics, of electronic mail use in newsgathering. The semantic pairs were chosen from those developed and tested by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum[45] and used in computing credibility scales developed by Tseng and Fogg.[46] Furthermore, this scale items drew upon the media and news credibility scales discussed in the preceding section.[47] The scale asked journalists to think about electronic mail as a potential newsgathering resource.[48] The electronic mail credibility scale was pretested using 26 student journalists and faculty members, analyzed[illegible]odified, and pretested again before the final scale was prepared.

Data for the scale were factor analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.[49] Mean scores for all scale items are listed in Table 1. The principal component analysis extraction method and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was utilized. Initial data factoring with a minimum 1.0 eigenvalue criterion resulted in a nine-factor solution accounted for 66.1% of common variance. However, some variables loaded below the desired .500 level and a total of 14 adjective pairs were eliminated. Eliminated variables are shown in boldface in Table 1. Factor analysis of the remaining 33 adjective pairs resulted in a six-factor solution accounting for 64.4% of variance.[50] The factor solution is reported in Table 2. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.948 for the 33-item scale.

FINDINGS

Journalists recognized the high technology element of electronic mail first and foremost in their evaluations of electronic mail as a newsgathering resource as shown in Table 1. The high tech characteristic rated highest on the scale (M = 1.10). Similarly it was seen as new school (M = 1.05), fast (M = 0.90), and current (M = 0.86) in the highest rated adjective pairs. They also viewed electronic mail as readable, simple, useful, timely, efficient, and appropriate. There were a number of characteristics, however, upon which journalists could not decide. These included precise-imprecise (M = 0.01), weak-strong (M = -0.01), cautious-rash (M = 0.03), colorful-colorless (M = -0.04), and public-private (M = -0.05). There were several characteristics that journalists viewed most negatively as well. These included sufficient (M = -0.34), partial (M = -.0.30), deep (M = -0.27), and incomplete (M = -0.22).

1. *What are the basic dimensions of electronic mail credibility?*

The six-factor solution yielded dimensions indicating diverse concerns. The factor that explained the most variance reflected the general *accuracy*, correctness, and appropriateness of electronic mail use in newsgathering. Other factors reflected concerns about the *completeness* of electronic messages, the *sociability* of communication, *clarity* in communication, *timeliness* of information, and the *complexity* of new *technology*.

Factor 1, Accuracy— There are twelve adjective pairs constituting this complex factor. The items reflect concern for correctness, accuracy, and appropriateness of use of electronic mail. It shows interest by journalists in accuracy and journalistic safety when using electronic mail to gather information. The factor is most characterized by the adjective pair, incorrect-correct, which loaded at .788. Respondents generally felt that electronic mail is neither correct nor accurate (inaccurate-accurate, factor loading of .754), but viewed it as unusual (unusual-usual, factor loading of .688). They also believed electronic mail to be appropriate (.626) to use, but doubted its trustworthiness, safety, or whether it was wise to use it under some reporting circumstances.

Factor 2, Completeness— The second factor reflected journalists' dissatisfaction with electronic mail's flaws as an interviewing and information gathering tool. It is anchored to incomplete-complete (.682) and objective-subjective (.681). Respondents also felt electronic mail was incomplete, shallow, and insufficient for news reporting and were uncertain about whether it was objective or subjective. In fact, journalists rated electronic mail lowest among all adjective pairs on insufficient-sufficient (mean = -0.34), deep-shallow (mean = -0.25), and incomplete-complete (mean = -0.22).

Factor 3, Sociability— The sociability factor stressed electronic mail's shortcomings and that it was perceived as impersonal. The factor's strongest variable was unsociable-sociable (.773). Journalists did not view electronic mail as sociable. The other factor loadings suggest that electronic mail was perceived as neither weak nor strong nor colorful nor colorless. They did perceive it as a friendly, interesting, and free means of communicating with sources and others in the newsgathering process.

Factor 4, Clarity— The clarity dimension demonstrated the readability of electronic mail (readable-unreadable, .808) as well as its understandability (understandable-not understandable, .753). Journalists felt electronic mail was quite readable and understandable. Furthermore, they felt electronic mail in news reporting was useful, clear, and important.

Factor 5, Timeliness— Journalists also identified a time element dimension with their electronic mail information gathering. They recognized the speed and timeliness components of electronic mail in gathering news. Fast-slow loaded strongest (.812) for the factor, but timely-untimely (.794) was also a strong loading variable. Journalists rated electronic mail as very current and reflective of breaking news.

Factor 6, Techno-Complexity— There are only two adjective pairs in this factor. The factor is best described using both pairs. On one level, journalists see this dimension as a matter of complexity (complicated-simple, .730). But, on the other hand, they seem to identify the dimension as high tech-low tech (.669). Journalists clearly see electronic mail as a high technology means of communication. High tech-low tech scored he highest positive mean, 1.14. Electronic mail was rated as complicated by respondents.

Thus, the study's remaining research questions may be addressed:

2. *To what degree is accuracy a component of electronic mail credibility?*

Accuracy is the foremost concern of journalists when using electronic mail for news reporting. It is the dominant factor in the analysis and the adjective pair incorrect-correct was the strongest loading pair. From this analysis, it appears that accuracy may be the single-most important element in determining journalists' use of electronic mail for news reporting.

3. *Do journalists identify technological concerns and issues in use of electronic mail as a reporting resource?*

The existence of Factor 6 points to the importance of technological concerns to journalists participating in the study. The Techno-Complexity factor, while consisting of only two adjective pairs, is separate and distinct from the five other dimensions.

Journalists clearly have an interest in technical issues related to communicating with electronic mail with sources and the information obtained in electronic mail messages. They see electronic mail has having a complicated nature and a high-tech nature and the degree to which these are perceived as barriers may determine use levels in information gathering.

4. *Are traditional credibility dimensions of trustworthiness, objectivity, and completeness part of the conceptualization of electronic mail in a newsgathering context?*

Completeness is clearly an important part of electronic mail's acceptance as a newsgathering tool. Until journalists perceive it to be complete, it may not be widely used. The respondents in this study identified completeness as the strongest component of the Factor 2. Furthermore, these respondents felt objectivity-subjectivity to be an equally important part of Factor 2. Trustworthiness, while a part of Factor 1, is also regarded to be significant in the use of electronic mail in newsgathering.

5. *To what degree are timeliness and speed viewed as components of electronic mail use in newsgathering?*

For journalists, timeliness is a closely held value. Electronic mail is perceived to be fast and Factor 5 reflects the time element in newsgathering by electronic mail. The two strongest adjective pairs for Factor 5, fast-slow and timely-untimely, indicate that journalists judge the usefulness of electronic mail in terms of speed. The other two components, current-dated and old news-breaking news, also point to the importance of this dimension to journalists. Clearly, one of the most appealing elements of electronic mail is its instantaneous nature compared to other conventional information-gathering approaches.

DISCUSSION

Electronic mail is established as a communication tool, but remains somewhat unproven in a professional environment such as a newspaper newsroom. While it is just three decades old, it remains quite new in some contexts.[51] Journalists are only beginning to understand its uses in both information distribution and information gathering. This study has examined the underlying dimensions in information gathering. The six factors are highly revealing. They demonstrate issues and concerns that these journalists relate to use of electronic mail. Journalists see electronic mail as a valid reporting tool, but also recognize its flaws. It is apparent there is extreme concern for accuracy of information obtained.

Journalists are clearly aware of the high technology value of electronic mail in their work. But they question how well it fits as a newsgathering resource. The first factor, Accuracy, is clearly the most interesting of the set and points to this issue. Accuracy, correctness, and appropriateness of electronic mail reflect considerations of whether electronic mail should be used for newsgathering or for other more non-journalistic tasks. The factor, because of its wide range of components, is difficult to interpret. Attention to the accuracy and correctness of information obtained is a high priority of respondents. These journalists are cautious and worry about whether they should trust information obtained with electronic mail. They feel the information should be questioned or challenged and see a certain amount of professional danger in its use. As a result, they must seek alternative ways to confirm information such as more traditional telephone conversations, previous familiarity with the source, or additional research.

There is awareness of the incomplete nature of the news gathered. The standard in this case, apparently, is the in-person interview in which all non-verbal cues and other aspects of information gathering are available. Just as the telephone is incomplete, journalists see electronic mail as somewhat incomplete, shallow, and insufficient. They remain mixed about the objective nature of electronic mail as well. This dimension suggests that journalists use electronic mail in conjunction with other information-gathering processes common to newsrooms today.

Journalists remain uncertain about the sociability dimension of electronic mail. They see electronic mail as having certain impersonal components in the information-gathering process that apparently concern them. While they view electronic mail as somewhat unsociable, they also are not sure whether it is colorful or colorless and whether it is weak or strong as an information-gathering device. They perceive it as friendly as well as important and useful to their work. Video and audio messaging, while not measured in this study, has been available on the Web for several years and remains rarely used. This feature of electronic mail, as well as conferencing tools, may not be widely used because journalists are limited by their hardware and software available in the newsroom or because they have not learned how to use it. When it is available, messaging and conferencing tools may give a more personal and sociable feel to electronic mail as well as provide confirmation of sources of information.

These journalists view electronic mail as clear and understandable and, because of its clarity, to be useful and important in their newsrooms. Clarity is based on its readability and understandability. It is also seen as highly useful and important to their work as information gatherers. With improvements in security and refinements in use techniques involving sources, it seems that usefulness and importance will only increase over time.

Still another important element of electronic mail for journalists is its speed and timeliness. This characteristic clearly contributes to its importance and usefulness as well, but it emerges as its own dimension because timeliness and speed matter so much in daily newspaper journalism. Because of the instant nature of much of journalism, this factor reflects an important feature of electronic mail that appeals to many reporters and editors. Currency of electronic mail information was another descriptor reflecting this point of view. The fact that it can be current when transmitted by electronic mail earned current-dated one of the highest mean scores among all adjective pairs. Its use in breaking and developing stories is also emphasized through the high rating of old news-breaking news and its high loading on the factor.

The highly technical nature of electronic mail, for some journalists at least, is also significant enough to become one of the dimensions of this information-gathering resource. Whether the factor is important and meaningful is debatable. It is clearly the least important of the six factors. The two items contribute little to the total explained variance. Nevertheless, the factor suggests that journalists see it as a complication in their lives, but, apparently, are willing to cope with that aspect of electronic mail to gain access to its advantages. Techno-complexity has often appeared in literature involving uses of new technologies and, the literature has shown, journalists ease into familiarity as newness wears off and such fears and concerns about complications disappear.

There may be age or generational factors at play when looking at electronic mail use in newsrooms. More experienced and older journalists—such as those who did not grow up using electronic mail— may have different attitudes about electronic mail. These individuals often have more senior positions in newsroom management that do not involve information gathering as much as they relate to information management. As a result, they may find different uses for electronic mail while at work. It seems appropriate to investigate age as a factor here and further analysis of these data will focus on this variable.

What do these dimensions of electronic mail credibility mean for newsrooms? The concern for the accuracy-appropriateness and complexity of the new high tech means of communicating and gathering information alone points to the need for additional training, discussion, and education-sharing about uses of electronic mail. Journalists not familiar with use of a particular electronic mail system may inadvertently sent information to the wrong individuals, make public confidential information, prematurely delete needed press releases or interview content, or otherwise err in the transfer of electronic mail-based information. Such problems may mostly become minor concerns, but they may also be potentially embarrassing for the individual, a newsroom, or an entire organization.

It is also apparent that there is need for review of newsroom policy involving electronic mail or, if there is no policy, development of policy about use of electronic mail in newsgathering. With their widespread concerns for accuracy, completeness, social interaction with sources, clarity, timeliness, and the complexity new technology, newsroom managers should focus on policies involving confirmation of identify of sources and the information those sources provide. If not policy level, certainly newsrooms should discuss the amount of time to wait for responses, for example, in the same way journalists must wait for callbacks from telephone messages. Methods of dealing with non-response to electronic mail in stories are also potential policy matters for newsrooms. Clearly, there are also legal and policy implications for short-term storing and long-term archiving electronic mail in newsrooms, particularly that electronic mail which contains information used in stories or information of a confidential nature that could be requested as part of a court action.

It is important to re-examine these findings in a theoretical context that goes beyond the conceptual literature of credibility. It seems that a uses and gratifications theoretical approach may enhance the meaningfulness of these findings. But it also appears that there may be potential to examine the findings in the context of the sociology of news work as well. This study provides a beginning place in the examination of credibility of electronic mail in newsgathering but would be stronger with a conceptual foundation. It is likely that journalists working in other contexts, such as online news Web sites, television and radio newsrooms, or newsmagazine journalism, may view the credibility of electronic mail differently or, at least, offer subtle distinctions in their use and understanding of electronic mail in news reporting. It would also be useful to determine if different types of users— such as groups defined by gender, region, newsroom role, or other demographic characteristics— view electronic mail differently as well. Perhaps additional study will reveal whether this is the case or not.

TABLE 1
MEANS FOR ADJECTIVE PAIRS

	N	Mean	SD	Var.
Hi-tech-low tech	188	1.10	.875	.765
Old school-new school	**182**	**1.05**	**.836**	**.699**
Fast-slow	183	.90	.964	.929
Current-dated	186	.86	.976	.953
Readable-unreadable	187	.76	.921	.848
Complicated-simple	182	.76	.810	.657
Useless-useful	184	.76	1.030	1.060
Timely-untimely	187	.75	1.094	1.197
Efficient-inefficient	**183**	**.71**	**1.021**	**1.042**
Appropriate-inappropriate	189	.67	1.143	1.307
Understandable-not understandable	187	.56	.922	.850
Old news-breaking news	186	.49	.914	.835
Disorganized-organized	**183**	**.48**	**.857**	**.735**
Incorrect-correct	188	.44	.971	.943
Knowledgeable-not knowledgeable	**187**	**.42**	**.872**	**.761**
Invasive-non-invasive	**183**	**.40**	**.920**	**.847**
Unimportant-important	183	.40	.920	.845
Inaccurate-accurate	188	.39	.944	.891
Interesting-uninteresting	183	.36	.889	.791
Incompetent-competent	187	.33	.846	.716
Bad-good	**183**	**.32**	**.902**	**.813**
Unclear-clear	182	.31	.925	.855
Constrained-free	182	.29	.933	.871
Dishonest-honest	187	.28	.810	.656
Qualified-unqualified	185	.26	.834	.696
Believable-unbelievable	**183**	**.22**	**.919**	**.845**
Friendly-unfriendly	183	.22	.959	.919
Reputable-disreputable	183	.21	.867	.751
Unusual-usual	187	.20	1.127	1.270
Trustworthy-untrustworthy	184	.17	.959	.920
Credible-not credible	184	.17	.954	.909
Dangerous-safe	183	.14	.872	.760
Meaningful-meaningless	**183**	**.14**	**.799**	**.639**
Skilled-unskilled	**187**	**.11**	**.879**	**.773**
Unwise-wise	183	.09	.830	.689
Objective-subjective	183	.08	.901	.812
Cautious-rash	**183**	**.03**	**.801**	**.642**
Precise-imprecise	**186**	**.01**	**.956**	**.913**
Weak-strong	182	-.01	.860	.740
Colorless-colorful	187	-.04	.994	.987
Public-private	**188**	**-.05**	**1.110**	**1.233**
Unsociable-sociable	183	-.11	1.060	1.124
Biased-unbiased	**187**	**-.13**	**.915**	**.837**
Incomplete-complete	188	-.22	1.004	1.009
Deep-shallow	183	-.27	.818	.670
Partial-impartial	**183**	**-.30**	**.926**	**.858**
Sufficient-insufficient	187	-.34	1.073	1.151

Items in boldface were eliminated in final factor analysis. Adjective pairs means ranged from -2 to 2 with zero as midpoint.

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TABLE 2
FACTOR DIMENSIONS

	1	2	3	4	5	6
FACTOR 1 ACCURACY						
Incorrect-correct	**.788**	.214	.036	.190	.155	.055
Inaccurate-accurate	**.754**	.215	.068	.164	.050	-.102
Unusual-usual	**.688**	-.071	.044	.120	.075	.061
Appropriate-inappropriate	**.626**	.207	.051	.175	.168	.233
Unwise-wise	**.582**	.201	.467	.249	.217	.104
Incompetent-competent	**.571**	.445	.211	.105	.129	.119
Trustworthy-untrustworthy	**.559**	.523	.132	.243	-.018	.084
Reputable-disreputable	**.550**	.349	.353	.239	-.083	-.018
Qualified-unqualified	**.534**	.400	.187	.219	.207	.151
Credible-not credible	**.529**	.394	.295	.437	.069	.090
Dishonest-honest	**.528**	.230	.082	.517	.081	.036
Dangerous-safe	**.522**	.438	.335	.129	-.130	.143
FACTOR 2 COMPLETENESS						
Incomplete-complete	.339	**.682**	.228	.042	.134	-.114
Objective-subjective	.241	**.681**	-.025	.250	.136	.100
Deep-shallow	.065	**.667**	.262	.127	.108	-.153
Sufficient-insufficient	.223	**.645**	.139	.128	.051	.250
FACTOR 3 SOCIABILITY						
Unsociable-sociable	.204	-.055	**.773**	.028	.210	-.064
Colorless-colorful	-.041	.255	**.620**	.085	.188	.050
Weak-strong	.408	.195	**.613**	.190	.159	.174
Friendly-unfriendly	.281	.273	**.583**	.225	.091	.133
Interesting-uninteresting	.075	.366	**.549**	.182	.137	.398
Constrained-free	-.042	.136	**.518**	.429	.285	.077
FACTOR 4 CLARITY						
Readable-unreadable	.222	.131	.157	**.808**	.149	.148
Understandable-not understandable	.351	.180	.144	**.753**	.159	-.020
Unclear-clear	.420	.217	.353	**.545**	.095	.177
Useless-useful	.456	.254	.083	**.521**	.245	.178
Unimportant-important	.455	.128	.268	**.506**	.231	.131
FACTOR 5 TIMELINESS						
Fast-slow	.045	.089	.074	.048	**.812**	.168
Timely-untimely	.107	.083	.180	.139	**.794**	.129
Current-dated	.244	.071	.234	.139	**.773**	.185
Old news-breaking news	.087	.088	.197	.185	**.766**	-.040
FACTOR 6 TECHNO-COMPLEXITY						
Complicated-simple	.149	.014	.164	.197	.065	**.730**
Hi-tech-low tech	.055	.088	.010	.000	.348	**.669**

* Adjective pairs means ranged from -2 to 2 with zero as midpoint.
Cronbach Alpha coefficient for 33-item scale reliability = 0.9482.

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spaces for each word pair how the words describe your beliefs about E-mail as a news resource:

EXAMPLE: Wet ____ ____ __X__ ____ ____ Dry
EXAMPLE: Wet ____ ____ ____ ____ __X__ Dry
EXAMPLE: Wet __X__ ____ ____ ____ ____ Dry

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The Evolution of Online Newspapers:

A longitudinal content analysis, 1997-2003

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Abstract

The Evolution of Online Newspapers:

A longitudinal content analysis, 1997-2003

This study tracked a panel of 83 Web sites produced by U.S. newspapers each year from 1997 to 2003, analyzing news, multimedia, interactivity, and potential revenue generating features present on the sites. Overall, the sites became increasing more sophisticated in each area, but small newspapers still lagged significantly behind their larger counterparts. The findings suggest that online newspapers are anything but stagnant as they approach the end of their first decade of existence.

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Electronic newspapers have been available in some form for more than 20 years, but the first fully Web-based newspaper, *The Palo Alto Weekly*, didn't begin its twice-weekly postings until early 1995.[1] *The New York Times* started its Web edition in early 1996. One year later, nearly 1,600 newspapers were being published online, including 820 in the United States.[2] While newspapers have long experimented with electronic technologies – including proprietary services, videotext, and bulletin boards – the World Wide Web is the most successful form of online newspaper publishing. In the eight-plus years that newspapers have been on the Web, site sophistication and the audience size have both grown significantly.

Early newspapers were criticized as "little more than static boards displaying weather, tourist and civic information, or telephone numbers of editors at the newspaper."[3] Since the mid 1990s, many newspapers have added more timely, in-depth, and original reporting to their sites. For example, Outing described online coverage of the Iraq war as "Web-centric, well-planned, compelling multimedia content (with) breaking-news headlines and video delivered at nearly the speed of television."[4]

Researchers have studied a variety of these emerging features including content,[5] use of technology,[6] interactivity,[7] potential revenue models,[8] and news efficiency.[9] Much of this research relied on data collected at a single point in time or focused on a single issue over a few years.[10] This study moves beyond cross-sectional analyses to examine, longitudinally, how online newspapers have evolved since their inception. Building on an introductory content analysis of 83 online newspapers published by U.S. dailies,[11] this study presents a content analysis of the same newspapers every winter from 1997 to 2003. Specifically, this study examines trends in news presentation and content, multimedia use, interactivity, and potential revenue sources. Additionally, the study examines how circulation size of print newspapers relates to content and features present in their online products.

Literature Review

Early online newspapers were harshly criticized for simply reproducing the print product

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online.[12] Regan warned publishers: "Simply sticking your content - or shovelware - on a Web site just doesn't cut it any more. With the tsunami of newspapers flooding the Internet, the need to differentiate yourself is crucial."[13] Peggie Stark Adam, a Poynter associate in visual journalism, told publishers not to be overwhelmed by technology and simply dump their print versions onto Web sites, but to think creatively through the development, creation, and delivery of information.[14]

The findings of a number of cross-sectional studies of Web newspapers are summarized below, divided into the four areas of interest in this study: news content, multimedia usage, interactivity, and potential revenue sources.

News content and presentation

While online newspapers are well-suited to provide frequently updated news, some early newspapers used their sites simply to provide contact information or promote subscriptions. More than a quarter of the papers analyzed in a 1997 study had not updated their sites in more than 24 hours.[15] Since then, however, studies have consistently shown news as dominant in online newspapers. A study of 74 online dailies, non-dailies, and specialty papers in early 1997 -- and 166 online sites six months later -- found that 92% of all the sites featured local news by the end of 1997. The presence of national news on the sites increased from 45% to 53% over the six-month period.[16]

Presentation of news content also has been studied, as news sites have experimented with designs and formats. A 1997 survey sent to all 247 online daily U.S. newspapers found that smaller newspapers (41%) tended to provide a directory-like listing of news stories on their front pages, while 59% of the national/metropolitan papers followed a traditional newspaper design, presenting news headlines, text, and graphics on the front page.[17] More than two-thirds of the papers provided electronic archives, and half updated their Web editions more than once a day.[18]

A survey of 135 online editors in late 1997 found that 57% of the editors updated their sites every 24 hours, while 41% updated more frequently and 2% less frequently.[19]

Fewer studies have examined the format of news stories online. An analysis of 230 genetic cloning stories on three online news sites (CNN, ABC, MSNBC) and three national newspapers (*The New York Times, The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*) from 1996 to 1998 found that online news stories were 20% to 70% shorter than print stories.[20] More than half of the online articles used outside services such as wire reports or guest columnists, but about 90% of the print stories were written in-house.[21]

Readers look for efficiency in online news delivery, and minimizing the number of links readers must follow before finding useful content is one measure of efficiency. A 1999 study of the efficiency of five online newspapers found wide variation in the number of links and layers users had to navigate before reaching useable content.[22]

Multimedia

The ability to add audio, video, and animation to news stories and other content, including advertisements, is a distinguishing feature of online newspapers. However, sites have been slow to adopt these features. Tankard's survey found fewer than 10% of responding editors reported using animated graphics, audio clips, or video clips on their sites.[23] Only two of 44 English-language online newspapers in Asia analyzed in 1998 provided multimedia content.[24] However, Dibean and Garrison noted an increase in the use of audio and video between November 1998 and July 1999.[25] Still, less than a third of the newspaper sites employed these technologies, and of those, some only used multimedia elements in advertisements and not in news stories.

Interactivity

The ability to engage readers in two-way communication distinguishes online from print publishing. Yet, early studies of interactivity found few sites taking advantage of the Web's interactive potential.[26] Kamerer and Bressers found online newspapers interactive sophistication increasing during 1997,[27] with 94% of the papers providing a newspaper e-mail address and 57% providing individual e-mail addresses by the end of 1997.[28] All but one of the sites in a 1997 census study had a general e-mail address, and a third sponsored forums and live-chats.[29] Tankard's 1997 survey found that 74% of editors reported providing staff e-mail addresses.[30]

A study of six electronic newspapers in 1998 and 1999 found that a majority used forums, related information, electronic mail, site searches, and consumer services to encourage interactivity. Few offered chat rooms, polls, or signups for customized news delivery.[31] A 1998 study of 44 English-language online newspapers in Asia showed that almost all of the newspapers offered e-mail links for feedback to the newsroom, while about a third allowed readers to contribute content. One-fifth provided real-time chats and forums.[32]

Singer's study of Iowa's online newspapers during the 2000 presidential primaries indicates that online newspapers are capable of employing interactive features in covering specific news events.[33] All five newspapers provided links within stories to national news, political party, or candidate sites. Interactive features present on one or more of the sites included polls and poll results, real-time chats with major candidates, streaming video, discussion of the debates, online quizzes, and an interactive town hall feature. All offered e-mail links to the newspaper and to individual reporters.

Revenue sources

A critical question still facing online newspapers is the development of sustainable revenue streams to support online ventures. Publishers originally expected sites to become profitable – or simply self supporting – in a few years. But even today, few online newspapers report profits. Early revenue models focused on advertising, both classifieds and display. Some papers experimented with subscription fees, but those were generally short lived. Harper's survey of 40 online newspapers in 1996 found 13 sites charged for subscriptions, seven had no advertising, and three providing free advertising. Another seven provided direct Internet access.[34] Kamerer and Bressers noted in their 1997 study that 76% of sites carried classified ads, 60% carried display ads, and 6% tries other forms of revenue generating activities (such as site hosting, sale of books, ISP, and providing Web page design services).[35]

The 1997 survey of 247 online dailies found that more national/metropolitan newspapers (87%) featured ads than did local dailies (73%).[36] Six percent of the papers charged subscription fees, and about 10% charged for archive access. A 1998 study of 75 online newspapers found that 91% published classified ads online, but few took advantage of existing technologies to deliver effective interactive classified ads. [37]

Circulation comparisons

Print newspapers with smaller circulations generally have fewer features than their larger counterparts and the same trend occurs online. While the findings noted above are presented, for the most part, for all online newspapers, many of these studies indicate clear differences based on newspaper size. Overall, online sites for smaller circulation newspapers had less content, less frequent updates, fewer multimedia elements, and fewer interactive features than larger newspaper sites. Tankard, for example, found that sites with large staffs updated content frequently, added hypertext links to stories, and provided video or audio clips.[38] Smaller newspapers were less likely to provide discussion forums and chat rooms.[39]

Research questions

- **RQ1:** Did news content and presentation online change between 1997 and 2003?
- **RQ2:** Did use of multimedia elements change over time?
- **RQ3:** Did interactivity provided by online newspapers change over time?

- **RQ4:** Did potential sources of revenue apparent on sites change over time?
- **RQ5:** Is circulation size of the print counterpart related to sophistication of news, multimedia, interactivity, and revenue sources used?

Method

To answer the research questions outlined above, a longitudinal content analysis of U.S. newspaper sites was conducted between 1997 and 2003, with data collection taking place each February between those dates. This approach allows for trend analysis over time.

Population and sample

The population of interest is online newspapers connected with daily print U.S. newspapers. When the study began in February 1997, a list of all U.S. online newspapers was obtained from the *Editor & Publisher* site's online newspaper section (then www.mediainfo.com), which listed about 880 online newspapers, alternative publications, publishing groups, news magazines, and specialty publications. About 60% of the total publications listed on the site in 1997 were classified as daily newspapers. In 2003, the population of daily online U.S. newspapers was 1,279.[40]

Researchers selected a purposive representative sample of newspapers in 1997 by selecting one online newspaper under each state listing. Next, sites were selected under the "national" category. Additional newspaper sites were added to achieve a balance among online sites connected with large newspapers (circulation greater than 300,000), mid-sized newspapers (100,000 to 300,000), and smaller newspapers (less than 100,000).[41] Finally, additional papers were selected to achieve a balance between early sites (started in 1994 or 1995) and newer sites (started in 1996 or 1997). The resulting sample consisted of 83 online news publications connected with U.S. dailies, about 9.4% of the 880 U.S. sites listed by *Editor & Publisher* in 1997, but about 20% of daily sites meeting the criteria defined by the researchers. The panel of

83 newspapers was followed over seven data collection periods through 2003, when 81 sites were analyzed.[42] By 2003, the 81 sites represented 6.3% of the population of online dailies.

Procedure

The unit of analysis for this project was the entire online publication, which included all site content (news, special features, advertising, and entertainment). Researchers followed links, but stopped once the link took the visitor outside of the newspaper's site. While analyzing entire sites was not difficult in the early years of the study, this analysis became more time consuming as site content grew larger and more complex. However, for most coding categories, coders simply acknowledged the presence or absence of a feature. Once a feature was found, the coder moved on to the next category. First, researchers collected demographic information about the site and its corresponding print newspaper, including location, circulation size, and site launch date. Next, researchers developed coding categories designed to examine each of the four areas of interest in the study.

News content and presentation

For news content, coders noted the presence or absence of local news, national news, links to an automated news wire such as the *Associated Press*, and news archives. For archives, coders noted the how far back archival news was available. These were coded as 1 for present or 0 for not present.

For news presentation, coders examined: 1) whether news was updated daily or less frequently; 2) whether news was first presented on the first level of the site, the second level, or the third or lower levels; 3) whether the first exposure to the site was dominated by news, site information, or an even mix of the two; 4) whether news, when first presented, was in the form of headlines only, headlines and capsules, or headlines and full stories.

To create a score for sophistication of news content and presentation, sites were given one point for each of the following, if present: local news, national news, link to an automated news wire, archival content, long-term archives, daily updates, and news on the first level of the site. News content sophistication scores, in theory, could range from 0 to 7.

Multimedia

To examine if online versions of newspapers were going beyond the standard text and static graphics found in their print editions, coders looked for any use of audio, video, or animation. Coders then noted whether these elements were being used in news stories and not just in advertising or entertainment content. Again, sites were given a multimedia sophistication score for these four elements which could range from 0 to 4.

Interactivity

Four interactive features were examined. First, coders noted whether sites allowed any user feedback via the site. This could be as simple as providing a general e-mail link to the paper for comment. Next, coders examined whether readers could contact news staff directly, either through an e-mail link to a reporter placed in a story or through a news staff e-mail directory. Coders also examined whether electronic communication sent to the site was posted in a variety of formats (such as forums, letters to the editor, or reader comments posted on the story page). Finally, coders noted the presence of customizable news options such as the individualization of a homepage or a personal news e-mail highlighting selected topics. Summing the point for each of these items created an interactivity score that ranged from 0 to 4.

Revenue sources

Because advertising is the business model of choice for print newspapers, five categories of advertising were investigated: any advertising present, real estate ads, real estate ads enhanced with images, classified ads, classified ads enhanced with search capability. Beyond advertising, other indicators of potential revenue producing sources examined were: 1) subscription – a charge to access any news items beyond archives; 2) registration – visitors had to sign in to use any part of the site; 3) Internet access – the site could serve as an ISP for subscribers; 4) charges for archives – the site charged for searching or accessing any archival material; and 5) providing in-house online advertising services – an advertiser's page was hosted on the site and the link on the display ad did not take visitors out of the site. With the five types of advertising features and the five types of other revenue sources combined, online sites could score a business model sophistication score of 0 to 10.

Inter-coder reliability

Two coders were trained using a nine-page protocol to gather data on the 83 sites each year. In total, eight coders collected data over the seven years. To test inter-coder reliability, nine newspapers each year were examined by both coders. Using the Holsti's formula, reliability within years ranged from +.74 to +.98 with an average inter-coder reliability score of +.89.[43] Computing reliability between collection periods was more problematic because entire sites could not be archived for analysis. Therefore, obvious coding differences emerged in some years, despite the training and protocol. Where possible, these variables were eliminated. However, in the analyses below, likely coding errors occurred on a few variables. These were not omitted because the focus of the study is a trend analysis, not a year-to-year comparison.

Findings

The 83 sites were connected with print newspapers ranging in circulation size from 1,435 to 1.89 million. Nearly 40% (33) were classified as small newspapers; 33.7% (28) were mid-sized papers; 25.3% (21) were large papers.[44] Papers were evenly distributed geographically.[45] Six papers (7.2%) went online in 1994; 29 (34.9%) in 1995; 33 (39.8%) in 1996; and 1 (1.2%) in

1997.[46] Over the seven years, 566 code sheets were completed, ranging from 83 in 1997 to 78 in 2001. In all other years, 80, 81, or 82 of the sites were analyzed.[47]

Research question 1

The first research question examined news content and presentation style at online newspapers from 1997 to 2003. As Chart 1 shows, each of the items investigated in this category became more common over the study period. Local news was a staple from the beginning when 89.2% of sites provided this content; by 2003, nearly all the sites (96.3%) featured local news. National news content showed a bigger jump, from being present on 54.2% of the sites in 1997 to 85.0% in 2003. Newswire provision fluctuated over time. Archives were present on 69.9% of the sites in 1997; by 2003, 95% of the sites had them. The number of papers with long-term archives jumped from 38.6% to 67.5% over the study period. The most dramatic increase was the number of sites providing news on the first layer of the site: in 1997, 53.0% did so, in 2003, 93.8% did. Finally, only 71.1% of sites were updating daily or more frequently in 1997; 91.3% did so in 2003. [48]

Chart 1 about here

Adding the point scored for each item paints a similar picture. Overall, average news sophistication scores increased significantly over the study period from 4.16 to 5.78, as the last column in Table 1 shows.

Table 1 about here

Two other news presentation features, first exposure to site and news on first screen, were not included in the sophistication score. In 1997, 31.3% of the sites presented mainly news on the first page available to readers, 37.3% included site information only, and 31.3% had an even mix of news and site information. From 1998 to 2002 the percentages in the first two categories steadily dropped, and by 2003, 92.6% of the sites analyzed had an even mix of site information and news on their first screen ($X^2 = 162.58$, df = 12, $p < .001$). For presentation style of news on the first news screen, in 1997, 27.5% of sites featured headlines only; 66.3% featured a headline and a capsule; and 6.3% featured a headline and a full story. Seven years later, the vast majority of sites (82.5%) featured a headline and capsule, while 15% featured headlines only and only 2.5% ran the headline and full story on the first news screen.

Research question 2

The second research question examined multimedia elements used on the sites. As Chart 2 shows, all multimedia features examined increased (with some fluctuation) over time. Animation was most common in 1997 and it remained so throughout the study period, even with the fluctuation noted between 1997 and 2000. By 2001, more than 90% of the sites featured animation, with 93.8% having animation by 2003. Audio content was only 15.7% of the sites in 1997; 45.0% had audio by 2003. Video showed an even more dramatic increase from 7.2% in 1997 to 45.0% in 2003. Finally, multimedia feature use in news stories increased dramatically from 14.5% in 1997 to 43.8% by 2003. As with news, the average multimedia sophistication score showed a dramatic increase, from 0.90 in 1997 to 2.26 in 2003 (See Table 1).

Chart 2 about here

Research question 3

The third research question investigated interactive features present. Unlike the previous two questions, interactivity variables examined did not show dramatic increases over time. As Chart 3 shows, allowing readers to connect to the site through the most basic of all interactivity, a general e-mail, was present on 95.2% percent of sites in 1997 and 100% in 2003. Posting reader responses in some form (forums, attached to the story, e-mail letters to the editor) only increased slightly, from 57.8% to 75.0%.[49] Customizable news was rare in 1997 (offered by 9.6% of sites), peaked at 27.2% in 1998, and dropped off again until 2002 and 2003, when

24.4% of sites offered this feature.[50] The one interactive variable that showed a significant jump over time was providing staff e-mail addresses. Between 1997 and 1999, less than 60% of sites provided these. Between 2000 and 2002, staff e-mails were available on 70% to 80% of sites. In 2003, that percentage jumped to 93.4%.

Chart 3 about here

Combining these four interactive elements to create an interactivity sophistication score showed that sites used a significantly higher number of these elements over time. Interactivity scores increased from 2.18 to 2.86 over the study period (See Table 1).

Research question 4

The fourth research question examined features found online that could indicate revenue sources for the paper. Five advertising features were investigated. As Chart 4 shows, general advertising, real estate ads, and classified ads were popular in 1997 (on 80.7%, 72.3%, and 72.3% of sites, respectively) and became significantly more popular over the seven years. By 2003, all three were present on more than 95% of sites analyzed. The more dramatic growth came in "enhancement" to these ads. Search capabilities for classified advertising were present on only 51.8% of sites in 1997 but 82.7% of sites in 2003. Real estate ads enhanced with visuals grew from being present on 22.9% of sites in 1997 to 49.4% in 2003.

Chart 4 about here

Next, other potential revenue sources were examined (See Chart 5). Two of these sources, providing Internet access (serving as an ISP) and creating or hosting advertiser sites internally, were preferred business models in 1997 but declined dramatically over the next six years. Internet access was offered by 20.5% of sites in 1997 but only 2.5% in 2003. While 71.1% of sites hosted and created internal ad services in 1997, only 11.3% did so in 2003. These percentages made them the two least popular revenue sources in 2003. In contrast, the other three sources showed slight or dramatic increases. Paid online subscriptions, used by 6.0% of sites in 1997, declined through the middle of the study period, with only one site charging a subscription in 1999 and 2000. However, by 2003, subscriptions were charged by 15.0% of sites. Registration for use of any part of the site, a variable added in 2000 when registration became common, grew from 4.9% of sites that year to 48.8% in 2003. Finally, while 47.0% of sites charged for archives in 1997, 77.5% of sites did so by 2003.

Chart 5 about here

Combining the five advertising features and the five other revenue sources examined produced a revenue source sophistication score, indicating whether online producers were looking toward multiple revenue sources to increase economic viability. As Table 1 shows, the average revenue source sophistication score jumped from 4.45 in 1997 to 5.73 in 2003.

Research question 5

The final research question investigated whether print newspaper size made a difference in content, multimedia, interactivity, and revenue sources featured online. To conduct these analyses, small, medium, and large newspapers were compared over time on the four sophistication scores using factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs). In each of the four ANOVAs, both data collection time and circulation size produced large main effects (ranging from F = 4.77 to F = 72.89, all significant at p < .001). The main effect for collection time was expected, given the increase in all four total sophistication scores over time.

As the literature suggested, newspaper size did make a significant difference. Larger and medium sized newspapers had significantly higher scores across the board than smaller newspapers. A more interesting pattern emerges when examining the means of small, medium, and large newspapers over time (See Table 1). Whereas the means for all three sizes of newspapers differed significantly in 1997, means for medium and large sized newspapers' sophistication scores became more similar over time. In some instances, the medium sized newspapers had slightly higher scores than their larger counterparts. In contrast, while the small newspapers show significant increases on the scores throughout the period of study, their scores in all four areas still lagged significantly behind the medium and larger papers in 2003. To illustrate this point, the four sophistication scores were summed, creating a total sophistication score for each title over time. As Chart 6 shows, large and medium newspapers' means were virtually identical from 2000 to 2003, while small newspapers lagged significantly behind.

Chart 6 about here

Discussion

Two clear trends emerged over the seven years. First, online newspapers are offering more of everything – content, multimedia, interactivity, and revenue-generating features. Instead of discontinuing one type of feature when another is added, the sites, on the whole, have expanded offerings. Second, size matters for online newspapers. While medium and large newspapers have become more similar, small papers lag behind. Each trend is explored below.

More of everything

Each of the four areas of online analyzed showed significant increases in the breadth and total number of features offered. For news, local reports still dominate, but sites have increasingly offered other content, including archives, national news, and newswires. Clearly, online newspapers are becoming stand-alone news products rather than supplements or advertising vehicles for their print parents.

Presentation of news content also has changed dramatically. Online newspapers are more likely to update frequently, providing more timely information. News is now presented on the first layer, and readers see an even mix of site information and news when they first log on. Most sites provide headlines and news capsules on the first news layer, allowing readers to quickly scan and select stories. These changes show that Web designers are constantly experimenting with what works well online. Future studies should examine presentation in more sophisticated ways than the measurements used in this study. For example, research could look for standardization in presentation across sites.

Multimedia use also increased, particularly in the last few years, suggesting that use of these features may be accelerating. While audio and video use showed marked increases, perhaps a more interesting trend is the sharp rise in use of multimedia in news stories since 2000. This rise may indicate that true multimedia story telling could become common on news sites in this decade, especially as more users switch to broadband. Future research should track how these elements are being integrated into online news sections.

The analysis of interactivity tells a different story. Although interactive features are significantly more prevalent today than in 1997, their growth pales in comparison to the dramatic changes shown in other areas. Other than adding reporters' e-mail addresses, no real growth was seen in interactivity. The data suggest that newspapers are still working to find interactive elements that function well in an online news environment. While these findings could be the result of the way variables were operationalized in this study, that interactivity levels have remained largely unchanged in seven years suggests an area ripe for additional research.

Newspapers clearly have abandoned two revenue streams that looked promising initially – serving as an ISP and creating or hosting advertisers' pages. It is likely these sources did not deliver the income that Web developers hoped they would. Instead, newspapers have enhanced advertising in hopes that this standard business model for print journalism will finally work online. In addition, more papers are charging for archive use and, in some cases, for use of special sections or for use of the entire site. Finally, newspapers are more likely to require registration for use of at least portions of their sites. With registration, newspapers are able to track user demographics, increasing value to advertisers. Papers may sell this information or at least use it for internal marketing efforts. The documented increase in types of revenue generators illustrates that no clear business model has emerged to support online newspapers.

Size matters

Analyses of the data based on circulation size paint an interesting picture about which sites are becoming more sophisticated over time. The original expectation was that the Web could make it easier for smaller entities – or even individuals – to enter the world of publishing once controlled only by those with enough money to purchase the presses. But this certainly wasn't the case in 1997, when large newspapers had more sophisticated sites than medium newspapers, which in turn had more sophisticated sites than small newspapers. And after seven years, small newspapers still haven't capitalized on the equalizing potential of the Web.

While medium and large sized newspapers now have equally sophisticated sites, the small newspapers lag behind in every measure analyzed in this study. Not that they haven't made gains over time. But if adoption rates of new features at smaller online sites continue at the current pace, they will never match their larger counterparts.

What's even more telling is that small newspapers were defined in this study as papers with circulations of less than 100,000. Many other studies have defined small newspapers as those with circulations of less than 50,000. When these very small papers were broken out for separate analyses, the disparity becomes even more pronounced. Future research that examines factors influencing the resources devoted to online editions at large, medium, and small newspapers would help explain this issue. For example, one newspaper that would be considered small by the definition used in this study, *The Lawrence Journal-World,* employs 20 people in its online staff, more than some large papers employ. Examining how resources devoted to online news relate to the content available would allow researchers to examine these issues with factors other than circulation size.

Conclusion

As online newspapers and the newspaper publishing industry face economic pressures, some have expressed concern that Web newspapers are stagnating. This study shows that rather than stagnating, online newspapers are expanding content and features. In fact, online newspapers are not only evolving, but are thriving – at least in terms of variety of content and features. Newspaper Web developers are experimenting, adding new elements, and abandoning things that do not work. As the industry moves into its second decade, this experimentation is sure to continue.

Table 1: Sophistication scores by circulation size/year	Small	Medium	Large	Total
1997				
News	3.24	4.50	5.24	4.16
Multimedia	0.40	1.00	1.62	0.90
Interactivity	1.70	2.25	2.90	2.18
Revenue sources	3.36	4.89	5.62	4.45
1998				
News	3.59	5.43	6.29	4.90
Multimedia	0.03	1.07	1.71	0.82
Interactivity	1.72	2.57	3.10	2.35
Revenue sources	3.66	5.14	5.90	4.73
1999				
News	4.19	6.11	6.33	5.40
Multimedia	1.00	1.12	1.62	1.19
Interactivity	1.94	2.50	2.67	2.31
Revenue sources	4.35	5.07	5.86	4.99
2000				
News	4.68	5.00	5.13	5.53
Multimedia	0.49	1.21	1.81	1.07
Interactivity	2.26	2.71	2.86	2.56
Revenue sources	4.52	5.57	5.86	5.23
2001				
News	5.00	6.41	6.25	5.78
Multimedia	1.10	2.11	2.35	1.76
Interactivity	2.17	2.78	2.80	2.51
Revenue sources	4.53	5.59	6.00	5.23
2002				
News	5.13	6.00	5.62	5.78
Multimedia	1.45	2.00	1.52	1.76
Interactivity	2.35	2.89	2.95	2.51
Revenue sources	5.19	5.46	6.24	5.27
2003				
News	5.17	6.07	6.27	5.78
Multimedia	1.30	2.81	2.77	2.26
Interactivity	2.57	2.89	3.23	2.86
Revenue sources	4.87	6.04	6.50	5.73

Note: All total sophistication scores showed significant increases over the seven collection periods (df = 6, 560, p < .001. F scores for Analysis of Variance as follows: News, F = 10.96, Multimedia, F = 13.61; Interactivity, F = 5.13; Revenue sources, F = 6.53.

Chart 1: News content, presentation

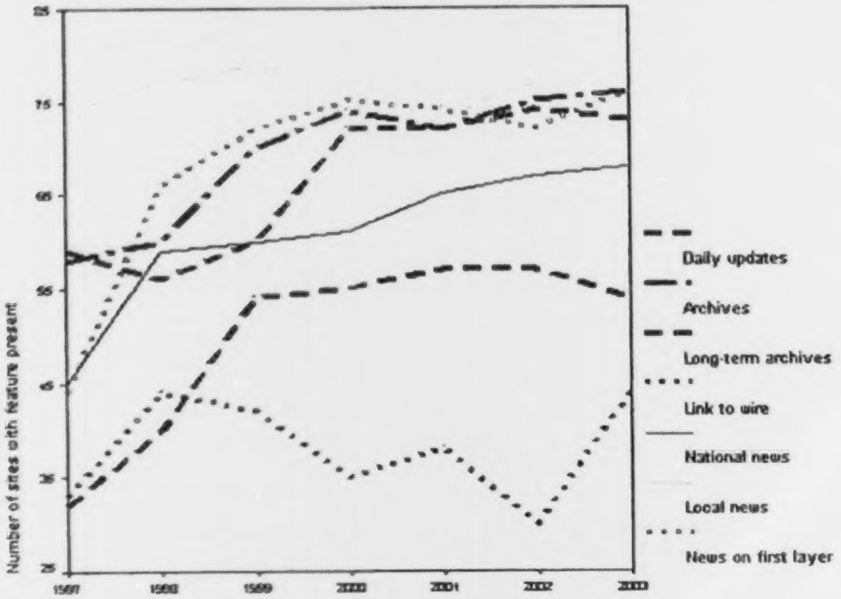

Chart 2: Multimedia

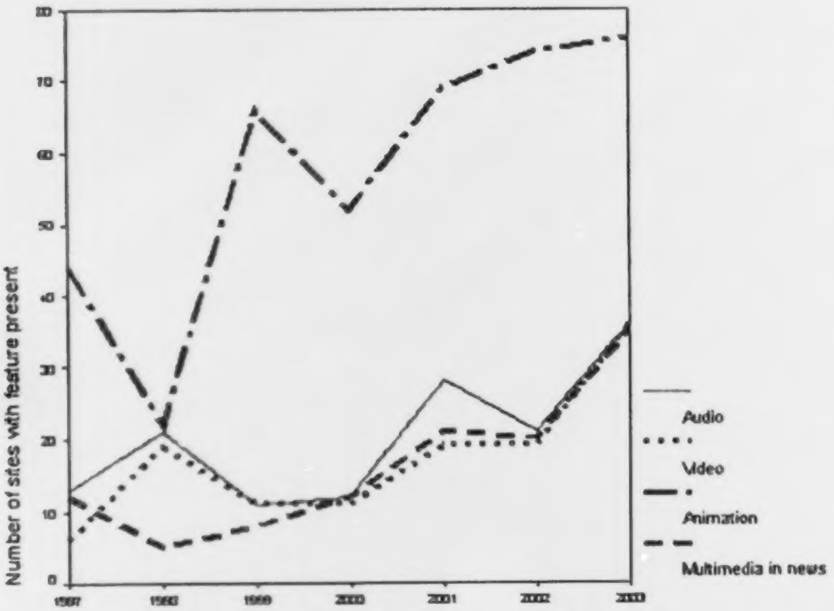

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Chart 3: Interactivity

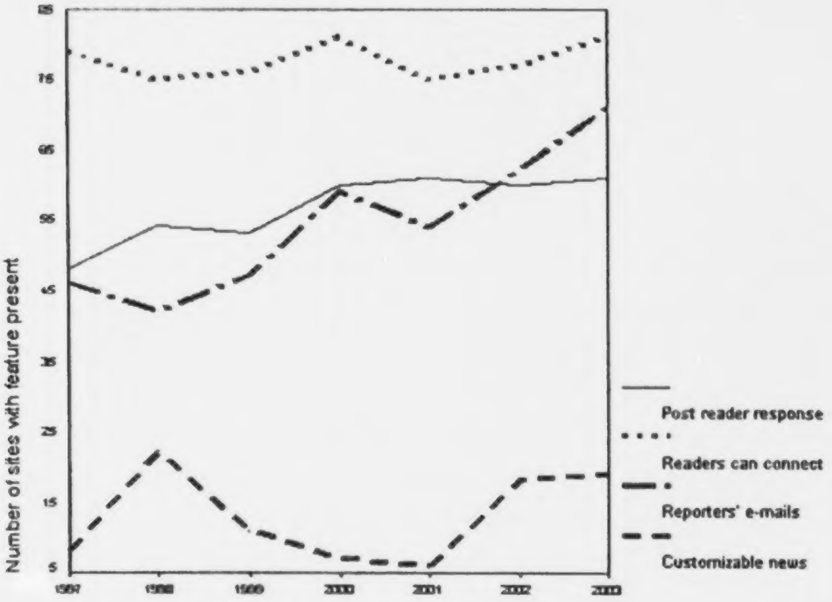

Chart 4: Advertising

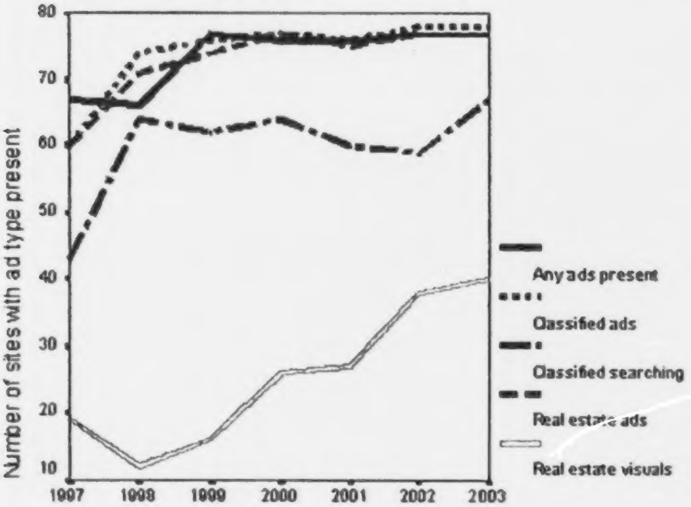

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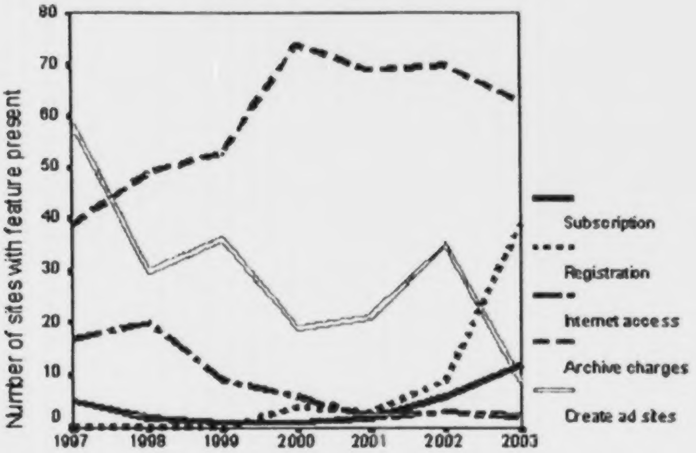
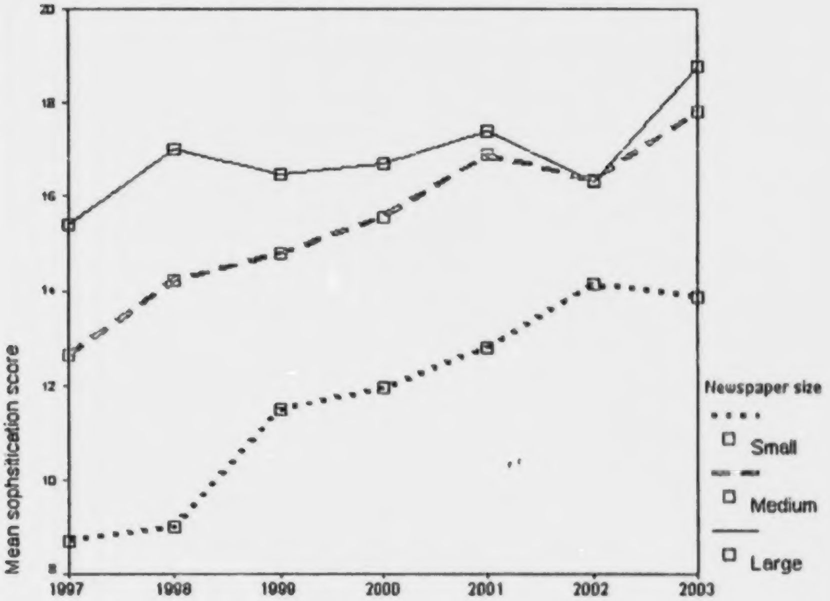
Chart 5: Potential revenue sources



Note: Registration added in 2000

Chart 6: Total sophistication score by size



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[41] Circulation figures were taken from the 1996 edition of the *Editor & Publisher Yearbook*. The non-Sunday or weekday circulation figures were used.

[42] One site went offline; a second merged with a group of other papers and was dropped from the analysis.

[43] Roger D. Wimmer, and Joseph R. Dominick, Mass Media Research (Thomson Wadsworth, United States, 2003), 157.

[44] Circulation size was unavailable for one title.

[45] 22 (26.5%)were in the West; 18 (21.7%) in the Midwest; 17 (20.4%) in the South or Southeast; and 22 (26.5%) in the Northeast. Another four papers (4.8%) were located in Alaska, Hawaii, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

[46] Online start date could not be determined for 14 (16.9%) of the sample.

[47] In some years, sites were undergoing reconstruction or not accessible on several attempts; two sites ceased publication during the study period.

[48] For all these analyses, crosstabulations were run using Chi-square analyses. In virtually every case, for news and throughout the paper, the differences over time were significant at $p < .05$. Therefore, these statistics are not reported in the paper.

[49] These were two of the few Chi-square analyses in the project that were not significant at $p < .05$.

[50] The peak in 1998 may be due, in part, to coding error that year. However, even without that year, it is clear that customizable news was not common until 2002.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Online versions of US Daily Newspapers: Does Size Matter?

by

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Introduction

In the early stages of the development of any new medium, it is important for scholars to engage in descriptive research so that the new medium can be adequately described and understood. The World Wide Web has been part of our lives for over a decade. However, its ability to be useful to old media such as newspapers and broadcast stations is under constant discussion. There is no doubt that the Internet can be useful to old media, but there is still some doubt as to the way in which it can be useful. Even more in doubt is the ability of the Internet to generate profits for old media channels.

Old media such as newspapers and broadcast stations have flocked to the Internet. This was not necessarily because they saw it as a way to directly enhance their profit potential, but because they were convinced that the Internet is important to them, even though they were not certain as to how this importance would play out.

Newspapers have had an online presence since the mid 1990s. Garrison (2001) reports that, by 1997, 67.3% of the daily newspapers in the United States had their own web sites, while by 1999 about 90% of the daily newspapers were on the Web. Pavlik (1997) reports that newspapers go through three stages in their online presence. First, repurposing newspaper content for the online edition; second, adding interactive features such as search engines and hyperlinks; and third, providing original content for the Web that is not found in the print version of the same newspaper.

Despite the growing presence of newspapers on the Web, print versions of newspapers are still more preferable, especially if the content is the same (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999). Furthermore, online versions of traditional newspapers have more credibility in this new competitive environment—an environment that includes online news from non-traditional media (Russell 2001). For one thing, newspaper sites continue to use the same legitimated sources and provide a similar version of events as their print version (Russell 2001).

Generally, however, readers seem to find the two versions of a single newspaper as complementing each other, not competing. As expected, people under the age of 35 are more likely to read online versions of newspapers. However, Stempel, Hargrove and Bernt (2000) found that "those who use the Internet are more likely than those who don't use it to be regular newspaper readers." These people are simply more active, or information seeking people.

Online versions of out-of-town newspapers are attractive to readers, given their accessibility and relatively low cost (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999). Chyi and Lasorsa (1999) also report that "national newspapers seem to take more advantage of the Web as a delivery channel to overcome geographic constraints and to generate new audiences" (p. 11). They recommend that newspapers should target out of town audiences and should provide additional services for in-towners to succeed.

Generally, however, online versions of newspapers have for the most part given priority to providing textual more than graphical information (Li, 1998). In fact, at least a few years ago, online versions were less likely than their print versions to use large pictures and graphs to illustrate news articles (Li, 1998).

At least theoretically, online versions of newspapers have the ability to use web technologies to go beyond the traditional print content. For example, links used in online versions allow readers to spend more time reading the online version (Ketterer, 2001), as they choose the direction of their online reading experience. As Dibean and Garrison (2001) suggest, such technologies change routines and practices. However, over the past five years, scholars have bemoaned the fact that online versions of newspapers do not take full advantage of the technology available (Li, 1998). For example, Dibean and Garrison (2001) found that although newspapers of all sizes use technologies to provide customer service, and regional newspapers have a large technological base reflected on their sites, very few papers use plug-in technologies. Thompson and Wassmuth (2001) also found that although 91% of the newspapers have classified ads online, they differ greatly on interactive features. Nevertheless, one area where newspapers are beginning to excel is in providing breaking news coverage, many times faster that broadcast media (Heyboer, 2000).

A variety of content analyses of the WWW have been examined by McMillan (2000), who finds three themes among the findings: First, there is diversity in content, funding sources, and communication models on the Web. Second, although there is commercialization on the Web and it has given voice to small political entities. And third, the Web is not being used to its full potential in terms of its interactive capabilities.

Various scholars have used content analysis to describe Web versions of newspapers. Lin & Jeffres (2001) found that newspapers provide "a greater emphasis (than broadcast media) in such technical elements as links to community sites and links to print media" (p. 566). In addition, online papers provide much in terms of community service, advertising, news, as well as email and feedback.

In some of these studies a variable that has been examined is newspaper size. For example, most publishers report that they are on the Web primarily to reach new readers and secondarily to generate more revenue (Peng, Naphtali & Xiaoming, 1999). However, differences exist between larger and smaller newspapers in this regard. For example, larger city newspapers say generating more income is the main reason, followed by promoting the paper. Smaller papers say their primary reason is promoting the paper, followed by generating more income (p. 56).

Newspapers have also been found to vary in their approach to their online presence. Larger dailies provide a more traditional newspaper page online, while smaller ones have more links with directories (Peng, Naphtali & Xiaoming, 1999.) Lin and Jeffres (2001, p. 568) found that market size is largely irrelevant in how media website content is shaped. However, larger market papers tend to provide more advertising content than smaller markets. They also state that "the development of content services on the Internet is moving so rapidly that repeated snapshots must be taken to track changes in how the media react in this fast-changing competitive online media environment" (p. 555).

This study is in response to the need to keep monitoring the online media environment. It attempts to answer the following questions:

Research Question One: What type of content and related techniques do newspapers use for their online versions?

Research Question Two: Does size of the newspaper affect the online content?

Method

This study involves a content analysis of the Internet version of U.S. daily newspapers. A sample of newspapers across the United States was generated using the systematic random sample process. The sampling frame was websites of daily newspapers appearing on AJR's "newslink.org" under newspapers by state, which listed 1161 U.S. newspapers. The systematic random sample process intended to gather at least 10 percent of newspaper websites, resulted in a sample of 144 sites. Two of these were no longer available when the content analysis started, thus 142 sites make up the final sample. According to (McMillan, 2000) content analysis for this type of research is acceptable because it attempts to describe the characteristics of communication as Holsti (1969) defined it.

For this study, content categories were created first by using examples of other studies, such as Lin and Jeffres (2001), Massey and Levy (1999), and some suggested by David Kamerer, who published an early study on electronic newspapers (Mueller & Kamerer, 1995). In addition, other content categories were created following some initial examination of a few newspaper websites (see coding sheet on Appendix A).

In addition to the items recorded via the content analysis, circulation figures of sample newspapers were also noted, as reported in 2003 *Working Press of the Nation* (2002). For use in analysis of variance tests, newspapers were separated in three groups according to circulation. Small newspapers were designated those with circulation up to 20,000 and they make up 52.6% of the sample. Medium-sized newspapers, or 34.6% of the sample, were those with circulation over 20,000 but no more than 80,000. And finally, large newspapers were those with circulation over 80,000 copies, and they make up 12.8% of the sample.

Initially two newspaper websites, not part of the sample, were content analyzed to ascertain the level of agreement among five different dyadic groups of coders. The achieved level of agreement was 100 percent using Holsti's (1969) method. Thus ten trained undergraduate students in a research methods course undertook the task of content analyzing the sample websites (see coding procedure on Appendix B). In most cases coders noted whether a particular online paper carried or did not carry a certain content item.

Composite variables were created by putting together a number of content items of online versions of newspapers, similar to Lin and Jeffres (2001). For example, Editorial Content was made up (by adding) the following content items: business news, columns, editorials, entertainment news, features, hard news, obituaries, photographs, sports, stock quotes, and weather.

The composite variable Community was made up of the following content items: community news, city guide information, jobs finder, calendar of events, homes finder, movie schedule, television listings, yellow/white pages, goings on, colleges or universities listing, city government information, restaurant guide, church listing, chamber of commerce, non-profit organizations.

Communication, as a composite variable, included chat rooms, guestbook, message boards, email the newspaper, email individuals at the paper, information desk, polls, customer service, letters to the editor, contacts for advertising in the paper, and contacts for subscribing to the paper.

Technology as a composite variable was made up of the following: archives, animation, audio clips, video clips, search engine, customization, live sports, live weather, cool sites links, and own domain name.

Interactive Entertainment was made up of games, puzzles, contests, and auctions. Advertising was made up of classifieds and display ads. In addition two other types of content were recorded: horoscopes and recipes.

Again, coders simply coded each category as present or absent on each newspaper's home page. Included here were links to other content but only the links were coded as present or absent. No analysis was performed on the other pages, although coders were instructed to visit the link in order to get a clarification about the type of content displayed.

A few content items were coded individually in terms of the number of such stories that appeared on the home page of each newspaper. These were number of local sports stories, national sports stories, total news stories, local news stories, national news stories, feature stories, entertainment stories, and number of business stories.

Findings

A total of 142 online versions of US newspapers were content analyzed for this study. A diversity of online content was found. Generally, daily newspapers attempt to have some kind of presence on the Internet. However, they vary as to the number of different items they carry.

In response to the main research question, most newspapers carry the following information on their websites: classified ads are carried by 88.6% of sample websites, weather information by 87.1%, sports 85.4%, news 83%, display advertising 82%, photographs 77.7%, obituaries77%, a way to subscribe to the paper 75.5%, community news 68.3%, and newspaper archives 67.6%. Items least carried by sample newspapers were live sports (only 2% carry it), auctions (6.5%), links to non-profit organizations 9.3%, chat rooms (11.5%), audio clips (12%) and video clips (13.7%).

The study finds a positive correlation between circulation and the content categories as expressed by each composite variable, except Advertising [r (N = 130) = .10; p = .25]. The larger the circulation of a newspaper, the more items making up each composite variable it carries. For example, Editorial Content is positively correlated with circulation, r (N = 118) = .27; p = .002. This means that the higher the circulation of a newspaper, the more editorial content items it carries. The correlation between circulation and Communication was also positive, r (N = 120) = .23; p = .011; as was the correlation between circulation and Community, r (N = 120) = .18; p = .047; between circulation and Interactive Entertainment, r (N = 130) = .30; p = .0001; and circulation and Technology, r (N = 113) =.39; p = .0001.

In terms of the number of editorial content items found on newspaper home pages, circulation is found to be significantly correlated to the number of entertainment news stories, r (N = 133) = .23; p = .007); to the number of feature articles, r (N = 133) = .17; p = .046; and the number of national news items, r (N = 133) = .31; p = .000. This means that the higher the circulation, the more such stories a newspaper carries on its home page.

The study does not find a significant correlation between circulation and the number of hard news items, r (N = 133) = .07; p = .42; the number of sports items, r (N = 133) = .08; p = .31; the number of national sports items, r (N = 133) =

.03; p = .73; the number of local news items, r (N = 133) = -.02; p = .77); and the number of business stories, r (N = 133) = .10; p = .21. Generally, online versions of newspapers list an average of a little over three news stories on their home pages, and most of these are local news stories (see Table 1).

An analysis of variance test was used to gauge differences among the three groups of newspapers and each content item as well as each composite variable. Overall, the larger newspapers tend to carry more content, and in many cases they tend to use a wider array of technological applications.

Significant differences between the three newspaper groups exist in such cases as, features, business news, entertainment news, and columns (see Table 1). Larger newspapers (those with circulation higher than 80,000) as a group are most likely to carry the above items on their website than medium and small size newspapers. For Editorial Content overall there is a significant difference found among the three groups of newspapers, F (2, 115) = 15.02; p = .0002, in terms of the number of content categories they carry under Editorial Content.

Table 1 about here

Examining the newspapers' Community related content and links on their website, again there is a significant difference between three groups of newspapers. Overall, larger circulation newspapers carried more of this type of content and related links, F (2, 117) = 12.5; p = .0000. Specifically, significant differences exist in terms of the presence of a jobs finder, homes or apartment finder, movie schedule, links to local colleges or universities, and restaurant guide (see Table 2). In each of those categories, larger newspapers as a group, were more likely to carry these items than medium sized and small newspapers.

Table 2 about here

Another composite variable examined is Communication. Overall, there is a significant difference found among the three groups of newspapers in the number of items carried in this category F (2, 119) = 6; p = .0021. Larger newspapers were more likely to have a way for the public to reach the paper for advertising, and they were more likely to have message boards or forums in which the public could participate. No significant differences were found on other items in this area (see Table 3).

Table 3 about here

Technology as a composite variable was also examined. Larger newspapers once again, were more likely to carry more categories within this composite variable, F (2, 110) = 8.45; p = .0004. Specifically, larger newspapers, as a group, they are more likely to use animation, live weather, and video clips on their home pages (see table 4).

Table 4 about here

Similarly, the larger newspaper group differed significantly from the other two in the advertising category, as more of them carry advertising than newspapers in the other two groups, *F* (2, 127) = 3.82; *p* = .024. It must be noted, however, that there is no significant difference found when examining classified advertising and display advertising individually among the three groups of newspapers, only when classified and display advertising are taken together (see Table 5).

Table 5 about here

Finally, another composite variable examined was that of Interactive Entertainment. Larger newspapers carried these items more than the other groups of newspapers, *F* (2, 128) = 8.7; *p* = .0003. Larger newspapers were more likely to carry games, puzzles and contests (see Table 6).

Table 6 about here

Discussion

This study attempted to examine the diversity of content on online versions of US daily newspapers. In addition, it examined the relationship between newspaper size and amount and diversity of content on these newspaper home pages.

Generally, it finds, as others have found earlier, that newspapers are still slow to utilize the full technological potential of the Web. Most newspapers carry advertising and editorial news and sports items. However, less than half of the sample newspapers seem to offer community-related links and multiple communication channels for their readers. Even fewer newspapers are taking advantage of interactive technologies available on the Internet, other than for search engines and online archives.

The relationship between newspaper size and available material on newspaper websites for the most part is a simple one—the larger the paper the more it offers. This is especially true in area of technology. In other areas, however, larger newspapers provide certain services, like movie schedules and restaurant guides, because such services are more likely to be found in larger markets. Most newspapers, however, are lucking in certain interactive services that could be used to entice readers to actively seek out the online version rather than the print version of the paper. Certainly this will follow as soon as newspapers figure out a way to reach the income generating potential of the Internet.

Needless to say, online versions of newspapers are evolving rapidly. As such, continued research must be undertaken to track these changes. Furthermore, others may find that composite variables used in this study may not be suitable for the examination of different relationships. In any case, this is not intended to be the definitive study on this issue, but only a snapshot of the development of newspaper Web pages.

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Table 1

Online newspapers' Editorial Content and Links

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	in means (1=present) medium	large	p =
Weather	87.1	1.17	1.10	1.0	.14
Sports	85.4	1.18	1.10	1.0	.12
Hard News	83.0	1.21	1.17	1.0	.10
Photographs	77.7	1.23	1.19	1.05	.26
Obituaries	77.0	1.20	1.24	1.11	.54
Features	63.7	1.48	1.22	1.18	.006*
Business News	61.2	1.53	1.28	1.05	.0002*
Entertainment News	55.0	1.56	1.39	1.17	.009*
Editorials	50.0	1.60	1.34	1.47	.22
Stock Quotes	35.0	1.66	1.66	1.53	.60
Columns	25.0	1.85	1.72	1.35	.0001*
CONTENT TOTAL		15.7	14.5	13.0	.0002*
		mean = 15.02			

News Items	Number of Items (in means)	Newspaper Size small	medium	large	p =
Local Sports Stories	0.76	0.55	0.84	1.25	.12
National Sports Stories	0.44	0.24	0.39	0.76	.38
Total News Stories on page 1	3.40	3.00	3.47	3.94	.67
Local News Stories	3.27	2.82	3.95	2.94	.36
National News Stories	0.88	0.47	1.00	1.82	.001*
Feature Stories	0.85	0.44	1.15	1.82	.09
Business News Stories	0.52	0.27	0.66	1.17	.019*
Entertainment Stories	0.32	0.11	0.28	1.17	.0018*

*statistically significant

Table 2

Online newspapers' Community-related web Content and Links

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	 medium	 large	p =
		in means (1=present)			
Community News	68.3	1.36	1.26	1.23	.43
City Guide information	48.9	1.59	1.46	1.41	.24
Jobs Finder	48.0	1.69	1.43	1.05	.0001*
Calendar of Events	44.9	1.56	1.59	1.41	.44
Homes/Apt. Finder	44.3	1.73	1.47	1.05	.0001*
Movie Schedule	40.7	1.71	1.58	1.11	.0001*
TV Listings	40.0	1.67	1.53	1.47	.16
Yellow/White Pages	32.0	1.60	1.71	1.64	.81
What's Up/Goings On	27.5	1.73	1.71	1.70	.94
Colleges/Universities	27.3	1.88	1.77	1.41	.0001*
City Govt. Information	26.4	1.73	1.73	1.64	.73
Restaurant Guide	25.7	1.85	1.71	1.35	.0001*
List of Churches	16.4	1.86	1.82	1.76	.54
Chamber of Commerce	16.4	1.84	1.80	1.82	.88
Non-Profit Organizations	9.3	1.91	1.91	1.88	.92
COMMUNITY TOTAL		25.8	24.3	22.0	.0002*
		mean=24.83			

*statistically significant

Table 3

Online newspapers' Communication Channels and Links

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	 medium	 large	p =
		in means (1=present)			
Subscribe to the Paper	75.5	1.30	1.17	1.11	.11
Advertise in the Paper	62.3	1.45	1.31	1.11	.023*
Letters to the Editor	43.3	1.63	1.41	1.47	.58
Customer Service	33.1	1.44	1.28	1.23	.13
Polls	29.7	1.70	1.71	1.58	.60
Information Desk	29.0	1.77	1.68	1.52	.11
Email Individuals	28.1	1.75	1.71	1.58	.42
Contact the Paper	28.0	1.15	1.15	1.00	.21
Message Boards/Forum	28.0	1.86	1.63	1.47	.0005*
Guestbook	19.0	1.73	1.86	1.93	.08
Chat Rooms	11.5	1.92	1.84	1.94	.32
TOTAL COMMUNICATION		18.1	17.2	15.9	.0021*
		mean = 17.5			

*statistically significant

Table 4

Online Newspapers' Technology and Web Links

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	 medium	 large	p =
		in means (1=present)			
Archives	67.6	1.35	1.32	1.11	.17
Search Engine	63.8	1.44	1.28	1.23	.13
Live Weather	56.4	1.52	1.36	1.17	.022*
Animation	44.0	1.45	1.31	1.11	.023*
Cool Sites/Hot Links	26.0	1.77	1.76	1.58	.26
Customization	20.5	1.80	1.77	1.78	.95
Own Domain Name	19.7	1.22	1.22	1.05	.30
Video Clips	13.7	1.94	1.86	1.58	.0004*
Audio Clips	12.0	1.91	1.93	1.58	.003
Live Sports	2.0	2.0	1.93	2.0	.055
TOTAL TECHNICAL		16.6	16.2	14.6	.0004*
		mean = 16.2			

*statistically significant

Table 5
Online Newspapers' Advertising Content

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	 medium	 large	p =
		in means (1=present)			
Classifieds	88.6	1.13	1.08	1.05	.60
Display	82.0	1.23	1.11	1.12	.20
TOTAL ADVERTISING		2.58	2.40	2.17	.024*
		mean = 2.46			

*statistically significant

Table 6

Online Newspapers' Interactive Entertainment and Other Content and Web Links

Content type	Present in %	Newspaper Size small	 medium	 large in means (1=present)	p =
Games	27.0	1.88	1.60	1.52	.0003*
Puzzles	18.6	1.92	1.73	1.58	.0009*
Contests	17.0	1.86	1.84	1.58	.02*
Auctions	6.5	1.97	1.91	1.94	.41
TOTAL INTERACTIVE		6.2	5.8	5.4	.0003*
			mean = 5.9		
Other Content					
Horoscope	29.3	1.70	1.78	1.58	.33
Recipes	17.4	1.91	1.76	1.64	.015*

*statistically significant

APPENDIX A

ONLINE NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS

1. #______ Date: ____________ Coder Name:__________________

2. Newspaper Name: ______________________ (#____)

Any technical or loading problems?

Newspaper Circulation:

Web Paper Info

3. Search Engine (site) Y N
4. Online Archives Y N
5. Customization Y N
6. Animation Y N
7. Audio Y N
8. Video Y N
9. chat Y N
10. Calendar of Events Y N
11. Forum/messages/talk Y N
12. E-mail paper/contact Y N
13. E-mail individuals Y N
14. Subscribe to the paper Y N
15. Customer service Y N
16. Own Domain Name Y N
17. Letters to the Editor Y N
18. Games Y N
19. Contests Y N
20. Puzzles Y N
21. Movie Schedules Y N
22. Auctions Y N
23. City-guide Info Y N
24. Jobs Finder Y N
25. Homes/Apart. Finder Y N
26. Polls Y N

29. Restaurant Guide Y N

STORIES

30. Hard news Y N
31. how many stories on first page? _____
32. How many local? _____
33. How many national? ______
34. Stock quote service Y N
35. Entertainment news Y N
36. How many stories on first page? ____
37. Business News Y N
38. How many stories on first page?____
39. Features Y N
40. how many features on first page? ___
41. Sports Y N
42. How many local sports stories?
43. How many national sports?
44. Live Sports Y N
45. Editorial Y N
46. Photos Y N
47. Weather Y N
48. Live Weather Y N
49. Obituaries Y N
50. Guestbook Y N
51. Community news Y N

27. Advertise in paper Y N
28. Recipes Y N

52. What's up/goings on Y N

53. Information guide/Info. Desk Y N

Other Links:

54. "Cool Sites" or "hot links" Y N
55. Non-Profit Organizations Y N
56. Local Universities Y N
57. Churches Y N
58. Chamber of Commerce Y N
59. City Government Y N

Web Paper Revenue

60. Classifieds Y N
61. Display ads Y N
62. Other revenue streams? ______________________________

____

63. Columnists Y N
64. White/yellow pages Y N
65. Horoscope Y N
66. TV Listings Y N

Observations:

APPENDIX B

CODING PROCEDURE

PLEASE CODE ONLY THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ONLINE NEWSPAPER.
You can go to another page only to get a clarification on the link.

3. Search engine (site)
on the opening page, is there a window in which the reader can type in a search phrase and search that site (not the entire Internet).

5. Customization
is there are means by which you can get a "personal" edition of the news, for example, giving you weather for a particular city, news about a particular team, etc.? Similar to "my yahoo". For an example, see the Chicago Tribune Online.

9. Chat
An online interaction between users who can type messages to each other. Not bulletin/message board posting that intends the messages for all to see.

15. Customer service
Includes such things as stop your paper for a vacation, complain that you missed a paper or pay for the printed version Online.

16. Own domain name
If the opening page URL ends with ".com" ".org" or ".edu", then the newspaper has its own domain name. Most Online newspapers have their own domain name. If the site redirects you, what matters is, does the raw URL ending as above load a page. Example of not having a domain name:
members.aol.com/mynewspaper
example of having a domain:
www.thegazette.com

51. Auctions
Similar to E-Bay, where an item is placed up for bids by the owner and other bidders may place bids for that item.

24. Job Finder
A site that people can click onto for a listing of jobs available in the area.

30. Hard News
Breaking news, or top stories excluding sports.

31, 36, 38, 40, 42, 43,
On number of stories, only count the stories that include more than just a headline with a link.

37. Business
News on the economy, individual businesses, including stock market stories and merchandizing.

60. Features
Human interest stories, not breaking news or hard news. Not extremely timely.

44. Live Sports
Score updates every few minutes.

48. Live Weather
Current temperature and/or weather conditions.

52. Community News
Births, deaths, weddings/engagements, meetings, little league games, social gatherings and the like.

52. What's up/Goings on
List or discussion of events but no calendar.

54. Cool Sites/Hot Links
Link to cool sites as defined by the paper.

61. Community Guide
A link to many of the communities entities/organizations, etc.

62. Display ads
Are there any banner ads displayed on the opening page? Ads for the newspaper don't count.

The Paradox of Editorial Diversity:

A Content Analysis of the Cincinnati Enquirer and Cincinnati Post

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Abstract:

A content analysis of editorials over a one-month period of two newspapers operating under a joint operating agreement in Cincinnati found that while the two papers did not differ ideologically, they did offer a high degree of diversity in editorial topics. The study also found that with the few editorials in which the two papers wrote on common topics, disagreement involved areas of focus within the editorials rather than opinions or conclusions.

A common assumption about newspaper markets is that the competition brought about by the existence of two or more daily newspapers in a market fosters diversity and competition of ideas and news coverage (Lasorsa 1991, 38). This competition would include different types of stories covered by the separate editorial staffs, different emphasis given to stories of similar topics, different approaches to those stories, and the existence of varying ideologies and topics on the editorial page. Such competition is vital to maintain democratic government, as Glasser argued in his defense of a free press:

> First Amendment protection ... is desirable because it fosters a robust and uninhibited press; a robust and uninhibited press is desirable because it is a press able and presumably willing to accommodate divergent points of view; divergent points of view are desirable because they sustain public debate; public debate is desirable because it nurtures an informed citizenry; and an informed citizenry is desirable because it brings about a more perfect polity and, in the end, legitimates the very idea of self government (Glasser 1984, 137).

The joint operating agreement (JOA) phenomenon began during the Depression as a means of easing the financial stresses of competition (Adams 1996, 195). After the first formalized agreement was formed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1933, joint operating agreements continued to be formed until 1969, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such agencies were illegal. The next year, Congress passed and President Richard Nixon signed the Newspaper Preservation Act. The act allows a joint operating agreement, in which "two separate newspapers form an operating agency which allows a common printing plant, coordinates method and field of publication, allocates production facilities, plans distribution, conducts advertising solicitation, provides a shared business department, establishes advertising and circulation rates, and determines revenue distribution" (Pratte 1986-87, 31). However, it must be demonstrated that one of the two newspapers is in "probable danger of failing" (Pember 1990, 591). A 1972 federal district court ruling, while pointing out that joint operating agreements were not intended to foster monopolies, said such agreements serve to preserve editorial independence and the Newspaper Preservation Act meets constitutional muster. In that ruling, Judge Oliver Carter wrote:

> Here the act was designed to preserve independent editorial voices. Regardless of the economic or social wisdom of such a course, it does not violate the freedom of the press. Rather, it is merely a selective repeal of the antitrust laws. It merely looses the same shady market forces which existed before the passage of the Sherman, Clayton and other antitrust laws. Such a repeal, even when applicable only to the newspaper industry, does not violate the First Amendment (Pember 1990, 591-92).

The argument on behalf of editorial diversity rises from the belief – voiced by such philosophers as John Milton and John Stuart Mill – that from a marketplace of ideas the truth will make itself known. However, Busterna and Picard (1993) argued there is very little editorial diversity among newspapers in the United States, and both authors questioned how joint operating agreements would maintain a diversity of voices that did not already exist. "The American public is substantially middle-of-the-road, and so are its mainstream newspapers – those same newspapers that form JOAs" (89).

In his exploration of the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding the question of newspapers in a joint operating agreement, Pratte suggested that the dynamics of such agreements can pose ethical and economic questions for the owner, including these: allowing an outside agency to dictate such decisions as news hole, the allotted space for editorial departments, a newspaper's sections and when they run, and publication deadlines. Other issues related to joint operating agreements include domination of the failing newspaper by the more successful newspaper in the agreement and the added issue of autonomy if one or both of the newspapers are owned by newspaper chains or media conglomerates.

Pratte noted that editorial independence implies freedom from constraint from such entities as governments, religions, political parties and businesses. "Independent newspapers may also be described as those publications that are self reliant and whose employees are able to think and act for themselves with a minimum of arbitrary outside authority" (31).

Literature review

There are few studies that deal explicitly with the effects of joint operating agreements, especially on the editorial diversity of the agreement's member newspapers. Mass communication literature includes studies that deal with how chain-owned newspapers affect the quality and diversity of the news and editorial pages of their newspapers. However, the evidence in the totality of those studies does not lend itself to any clear-cut conclusions. In fact, Lacy (1991), in his review of the literature, found that studies conflict about ownership's effect on content.

For example, on the non-effect side of the equation, Hicks and Featherstone (1978), in a study of two sets of chain newspapers, found no evidence of significant duplication of content. Wagenburg and Soderland's (1975) analysis of seven Canadian newspapers belonging to the same chain found no evidence that any of the papers colluded in the writing of their editorials. Borstel (1956) found little consistent difference in editorial comment linked to ownership or competition, but he found that chain newspapers emphasized more local economic issues. Beam (1993), in a study of the professional practices of 58 daily newspapers, found few differences in professional practices between independent and group-owned newspapers. Drager (1999), in a study of the editorial page content of 105 newspapers, found very little diversity among the papers. Ardoin (1973), in an analysis of 36 newspapers involved in joint operating agreements, found that news-hole allocations in 10 categories often were much the same for the pairs of newspapers. And in a study in which results were consistent with most earlier research, Busterna, Hansen, and Ward (1991) found that whether a newspaper of over 100,000 in circulation was a competitive, joint operating agreement, chain or independent newspaper had no significant effect on the size of news and library staffs, the number of wire services or the number of databases used and monthly search costs.

On the other hand, Thrift's (1977) study of 16 group-owned newspapers and eight control-group newspapers showed that the group-owned papers tended to have fewer editorials of a controversial nature after purchase by a chain. Also, Akhavan-

Majid, Rife, and Gopinath (1991) found evidence to suggest that chain ownership can have a homogenizing effect on editorial position and policy. Nixon and Jones (1956) found that competitive daily newspapers devote more space to news than non-competitive dailies. Glasser, Allen, and Blanks (1989) found conformity among Knight-Ridder newspapers in the "news play" of the coverage of former presidential candidate Gary Hart.

In addition, Wackman, Gillmore, Gaziano, and Dennis (1975) analyzed endorsements for four election cycles – 1960, 1964, 1968, and 1972 – and found that chain newspapers were more likely to endorse presidential candidates than were independently owned papers and that the degree of homogeneity among chain newspapers was high for all four elections. Gaziano (1989) replicated this degree of homogeneity while examining elections in 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988. However, Busterna and Hansen (1990) were unable to find the same trend in a study of presidential endorsements in the 1976-1984 presidential elections. In fact, comparing their findings with earlier studies, Busterna and Hansen found that chain-owned newspapers displayed more autonomy than other newspapers. In addition, Demers (1996) found a relationship between the content of editorial pages and chain ownership. He concluded that corporate newspapers publish more local editorials, more letters to the editor and more letters considered critical of groups in the mainstream.

Similarly, Akhavan-Majid and Boudreau (1995) found in a national study of

258 daily newspaper editors that the chain-owned editors were more likely than their independent counterparts to perceive their role as one of activist and that as the size of the newspaper chain increased, so did this perception. In fact, an earlier survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (1980) found that editors at chain-owned newspapers were more likely than editors at independently owned newspapers to oppose their publishers and to have much more editorial freedom in endorsements in national elections and in making decisions on controversial issues. However, Demers (1993), in a study comparing chain-owned and large newspapers with independent and small newspapers regarding top editors' autonomy and ability to improve editorial content, found little difference between chain-owned and independent newspapers; editors at larger newspapers did report they had more autonomy in deciding upon editorial content, but the author noted that may be an effect of decentralization.

Three phenomena in newspaper markets lend importance to the determination of the effects of newspaper ownership and competition on newspaper editorial independence and diversity. They are the increase in joint operating agreements (the number had grown, since the first formalized agreement in Albuquerque in 1933, to newspapers in 22 cities by the time of congressional adoption of the Newspaper Preservation Act in 1970 (Pember, 591); the decrease in the number of daily U.S. newspapers over the last half of the 20th century – from 1,772 in 1950 to 1,745 thirty years later despite a U.S. population increase from 150,000,000 to 220,000,000 during the same period (Skylar 1984, 14); and the decrease in the number of cities that have daily newspaper competition – the number of such cities had declined, from 288 in 1930 (20.6 percent of all daily U.S. newspapers), to 39 (2.5 percent) in 1976 (Sobel and Emery 1978, 146). In 1986, 47 U.S. cities had two or more separately owned newspapers that were not chain-owned or newspaper operations in which the two newspapers were owned by the same company, a number that had declined to 20 by 2000.

This study focuses on editorial similarities and differences through an analysis of newspaper editorials of two daily newspapers operating in JOA in a metropolitan area. The study is intended to determine if the competing editorials of these newspapers offer evidence of diversity and independence and whether two newspapers that are part of a joint operating agreement meet the Newspaper Preservation Act's goals of maintaining editorial competition and diversity. The research questions were:

- Do the two newspapers offer daily editorials on similar topics?
- If they do offer daily editorials on similar topics, do these editorials differ ideologically?
- Do the two newspapers offer editorial diversity on such variables as total numbers of editorials published; geographic preference of topics (local, state/region, national and international); frequency of editorials published of a controversial nature; and variety and frequency of editorial topics?

The researchers hypothesized that (1) editorial diversity would be found and (2) that the newspaper editorials would differ in their conclusions when offering opinions on like topics.

Method

Researchers conducted a content analysis of a month's worth of daily editorials of *The Cincinnati Post,* an afternoon newspaper with a Monday-Saturday circulation of 55,807, and *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* a morning newspaper that circulates 195,360-218,667 daily during the week and 311,425 on Sundays (*Editor & Publisher 2000*). The *Post*, owned by the Scripps-Howard group, and the *Enquirer*, owned by the Gannett group, belong to a joint operating agreement, formed in 1979 (Pember, 592), in which the *Post* publishes every day but Sunday and the *Enquirer* publishes every day, enjoying sole Sunday publication. Editorials for this study were defined as unsigned columns that represent the official opinions of the newspaper's editorial board and that appear on the editorial page, which is clearly identified as the editorial or opinion page. Other material on the same page – letters to the editor, columns identified by an author who is a syndicated columnist, a writer from the community who is not employed by the newspaper, a writer who is not one of the newspaper's stable of editorial writers for the newspaper's opinion page – were not counted as editorials. Once a week, *Enquirer* editorial writers offer editorial notebook items that are signed by initials. Study researchers counted these as editorials, because they appeared in the same location on the page as the newspaper editorials and because they were authored by members of the newspaper's editorial writing staff. The researchers reasoned it unlikely that the general public would see a difference between these commentaries and the newspaper's unsigned editorials. All such editorials published during the first month of 2003 were analyzed. This month was selected because it represents a time period in which local, state, and national legislative and political agendas for the coming year are being formulated and in which mayors, governors, and presidents give their annual assessments (State of the Union and State of the State addresses) and offer major proposals for the coming year. Because this period is one likely to produce ideological differences among governmental factions, the researchers reasoned that topical diversity in editorials would be prevalent. Thus, newspapers published during this time period would be more likely to offer editorials on similar subjects.

To determine frequency of editorials published, researchers tallied editorials in the two newspapers for the month of January – 27 days for the *Post* and 31 days for the *Enquirer*. Editorials then were separated and counted according to geographical topic – local, state/region, national, international and other (the latter category for topics that were too general to be limited by geographic boundary). To determine frequency of editorials on same subjects, the researchers then identified the editorials by subject and separated them into those that addressed common topics and those that did not. To determine whether opinions differed on these subjects, the four researchers read the editorials and determined, based on the editorials' recommendations and conclusions, if they differed, separating the editorials into those that agreed and those that did not agree.

The researchers devised coding to determine frequency of editorials that dealt with controversial topics. The following coding was used: Editorials were separated into two types, those defined as editorials of a general/non-controversial nature (typified by a broadness of topic, lacking a discussion of specific policies, decisions, proposals or actions and/or offering discussions of topics that are one-sided or without general opposition); and editorials of a specific/controversial nature (typified by a discussion of specific policies, decisions, proposals or actions and/or offering discussions of topics that have more than one side or that have general opposition. An example of a general/non-controversial editorial would be one lamenting the death of editorial cartoonist Bill Mauldin or one welcoming the new Cincinnati Bengals head coach to town. An example of a specific/controversial editorial would be one discussing a tax-increase proposal put forth by the state governor or one commenting on how the United States should respond to the North Korea nuclear-proliferation crisis. These editorials were then separated and counted accordingly.

To determine the range of editorial topics, researchers used categories devised by Deutschmann. These categories are: war and defense, popular amusements, general human interest, economic activity, education and classic arts, politics and government, crime, accident and disaster, public health and welfare, science and invention, and public moral problems (Deutschmann 1959, 92-95). These editorials were then separated and counted accordingly. To test for inter-coder reliability, the coders, who had separated into groups of two, one group for each newspaper, traded newspapers and repeated coding. This resulted in five cases of disagreement, for a reliability percentage of 96.5 percent.

Results

The *Post* published 56 editorials during 27 days (an average of two per day). The *Enquirer* published 86 editorials during 31 days – nearly three per day (see Table 1). Researchers found a noticeable difference in the percentage of local editorials published by each newspaper. The *Post* published 12 editorials dealing with local topics, about a fifth of its total editorials during the period studied, while the *Enquirer* published 34 editorials on local topics, nearly two-fifths of its total (see Table 2). Other geographical breakdown totals and the newspapers' percentages of total editorials for each were: State/Regional – *Post* 10 (18 percent), *Enquirer* 14 (16 percent); National – *Post* 27 (48 percent), *Enquirer* 30 (35 percent); International – *Post* 5 (9 percent), *Enquirer* 6 (7 percent); and Other – *Post* 2 (3.5 percent), *Enquirer* 2 (2.3 percent).

Of all 142 editorials published by the two newspapers during January, those on common topics, such as the president's State of the Union speech or the governor's State of the State speech, totaled 34 (see Table 3). Of these common topics, the newspapers drew similar conclusions, or agreed, on 11 (see Table 4).

The *Post* editorialized on specific/controversial topics 44 times – 78.6 percent of its total editorials (see Table 5). The *Enquirer's* specific/controversial editorials totaled 65, for a percentage of 75.6 percent.

The two newspapers demonstrated little diversity in emphasis placed on editorial topics. Politics and government, and war and defense were the two categories receiving the largest number of editorials by both newspapers. The politics and government category was noticeably the most popular one for both newspapers (see Table 6), while other categories and frequencies varied broadly. Spearman's Rho for these findings was 0.7523, with a significance level of 0.0038.

Discussion

The researchers determined that the results of the study support the first hypothesis, that editorial diversity exists between the two major daily newspapers in Cincinnati. But the second hypothesis, that the newspaper editorials would differ ideologically in their conclusions when offering opinions on like topics, was not supported, for reasons discussed below.

In the most general and obvious measure of diversity – total numbers of editorials – the *Enquirer* published a greater number of editorials during the period studied, averaging nearly three editorials a day to the *Post's* two. This likely is due at least in part to the limitations on the publication days allowed to the *Post* under terms of the joint operating agreement. The study also found diversity in the analysis of geographical topicality. The *Enquirer* offered more editorials on local subjects –

nearly double the percentage of its total editorials (39.5 percent, compared to the *Post's* 21.4 percent). This suggests a difference in the importance each newspaper places on editorializing on local subjects – a conclusion supported by comparing each newspaper's frequency of editorials on national and international topics combined (about 57 percent for the *Post* and nearly 42 percent for the *Enquirer*). Combining the total editorial commitment to local and state/regional topics also suggests that the *Enquirer* places more importance on editorials dealing with subjects closer to home – nearly 56 percent of its editorials of the period studied were devoted to local, state and regional topics, compared to the *Post's* approximately 39 percent.

As pointed out, the findings did not strongly support evidence of differing conclusions in editorials of common topics. This lack of support was based on at least two discoveries. One is that the relatively few editorials addressing common topics (17 common topics in a total 142 editorials) generally did not offer specific suggestions, criticism or support, or conclusions; they tended instead to analyze and to offer broad or generalized observations, such as concluding that an issue or problem merits serious attention from lawmakers or officials. The second reason is that in the majority of editorials in which disagreement was found for common topics, the disagreement was on areas of focus within the editorials rather than on editorial opinions or conclusions. Specifically, the two newspapers took differing positions only on President George W. Bush's economic plan and on Ohio Governor Bob Taft's proposed tax increases. In the other editorials of disagreement, the differences were in areas of discussion, or focus, within the editorials. For example, while both newspapers offered editorials that proposed important policy agendas in the city of Cincinnati for the coming year, they did not agree on specific areas of need, other than transportation. And on that topic of transportation, the two newspapers were in general agreement about areas of need regarding transportation. Also, common-topic editorials on the president's State of the Union speech, on policies toward Iraq and its president, Saddam Hussein, and on the Super Bowl, did not agree when it came to the specific focus of those editorials. So researchers found scant ideological diversity in the January 2003 editorials of these two newspapers. Diversity of ideological positions in the arena was limited by the fact that the two newspapers were in the same arena just 34 of 142 times.

However, the issue of editorial focus also lends itself to support of a different kind of diversity – that of subject. That these two newspapers editorialized on only 17 like topics suggests that they offer the Cincinnati daily newspaper market diversity in editorial topics. Nearly 70 percent of the *Post's* editorials and nearly 80 percent of the *Enquirer's* editorials were on subjects that were not discussed by the other newspaper during the month studied. This suggests that rather than competing ideologically, the newspapers complement each other in terms of editorial subject diversity.

This inference is supported by the broad range of topics addressed by the two newspapers and by the large difference in percentage of total editorials each devoted to the most popular general topic of politics and government – even though the two newspapers' overall topic emphasis ranks were correlated (Rho = 0.7523, and p = 0.0038). The *Post* published nearly 61 percent of its editorials on subjects within this category, while the *Enquirer* editorials on political/governmental topics comprised about 49 percent of its total number of editorials in January. The next most popular editorial category for the *Post* was subjects of war and defense, 16 percent, while *Enquirer* editorials within this category comprised 9.3 percent of its total. Frequency of *Enquirer* editorials on crime (9.3 percent), education and classical arts (8.1 percent), general human interest (8.1 percent) and popular amusements (7 percent) indicate a stronger preference for these topics than does the frequency of *Post* editorials in the same subject categories – crime (1.8 percent), education and classical arts (1.8 percent) and general human interest (7.1 percent). The *Post* showed a generally similar interest as the *Enquirer* in popular amusements (about 7 percent). These findings suggest that the *Post* for this period indicated greater interest in government, politics and issues of war and defense (nearly 77 percent of its total editorials) than did the *Enquirer* (about 58 percent), and that the *Enquirer* indicated a slightly greater interest in a broader range of topics. This, along,with the rank correlation, the difference in editorials dealing with politics and government and the complementary nature of the editorial diversity represent an editorial paradox.

The greatest similarity in the two newspapers' editorials was found in the categories of general/non-controversial and specific/controversial. The *Post* published controversial editorials 78.6 percent of the time, compared to the *Enquirer's* 75.6

percent. This suggests that both newspapers agree that it is important to publish opinions about subjects that lend themselves to public debate and on which there might be some disagreement. But it also suggests that they agree there is room on an editorial page for whimsy and for discussion of topics such as climate and entertainment and other routine conversational topics of the day.

This study found newspaper editorial diversity in a metropolis that has more than one daily newspaper as well as editorial diversity in two newspapers that are participants in a joint operating agreement. Both findings support the argument of Chaffee and Wilson:

> Communities in which many different viewpoints on the same topic are aired, and in which shifts in the total public perspective occur, would seem to be functioning more in the manner of the Jeffersonian ideal than those communities where few problems are perceived as important, and where there is little diversity of opinion or change in perspective over time (1977, 475).

Because of the nature of some variables in this study – particularly controversial vs. non-controversial topics – the method necessitated a relatively small number of coders and consensual agreement regarding the shared reading of editorials.

Further study in this area would include similar analyses of joint operating agreement newspapers in other communities to expand upon the findings about diversity and types of diversity. It also would be useful to conduct a similar study in a community where there is newspaper competition but no joint operating agreement to ascertain if there is greater or less ideological diversity and if such newspapers offer greater or fewer numbers of editorials on like topics. Finally, it would be useful, in determining the evolution of editorial policies over time, to compare the results of this study to editorials of newspapers published during an era of greater newspaper competition – that of the mid- to early twentieth century.

TABLES

Table 1 – Total Number of Editorials

	Frequency	Days	Average
Post	56	27	2.07
Enquirer	86	31	2.77

Table 2 – Geographic Concentration

Category	Frequency		Percentage	
	Post	Enquirer	Post	Enquirer
Local	12	34	(2) 21.4286	(1)39.5349
State/Regional	10	14	(3) 17.8571	(3)16.2791
National	27	30	(1) 48.2143	(2)34.8837
International	5	6	(4) 8.9286	(4) 6.9767
Other	2	2	(5) 3.5714	(5) 2.3256
TOTAL	**56**	**86**	**100 %**	**100%**

Table 3 – Common Topics

	Frequency	Common Topic	Percentage
Post	56	17	30.36
Enquirer	86	17	19.77

Table 4 – Agree/Disagree on Editorials of Common Topics

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	11	64.71
Disagree	6	35.29
TOTAL	**17**	**100 %**

Table 5 - General/Non-Controversial vs. Specific/Controversial

Category	Frequency		Percentage	
	Post	**Enquirer**	**Post**	**Enquirer**
General/Non-Controversial	12	21	21.43	24.42
Specific/Controversial	44	65	78.57	75.58
TOTAL	**56**	**86**	**100 %**	**100%**

Table 6 – Deutschmann Categories

Category	Frequency		Percentage	
	Post	Enquirer	Post	Enquirer
War and Defense	9	8	16.07	9.3
Popular Amusements	4	6	7.14	6.98
General Human Interest	4	7	7.14	8.14
Economic Activity	1	4	1.79	4.65
Education and Classical Arts	1	7	1.79	8.14
Politics and Government	34	42	60.71	48.84
Crime	1	8	1.79	9.30
Accident and Disaster	0	0	0	0
Public Health and Welfare	2	1	3.57	1.16
Science and Invention	0	3	0	3.49
Public Moral Problems	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**56**	**86**	**100 %**	**99.9999 %**

Spearman's Rho=0.7523; p=0.0038

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